



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

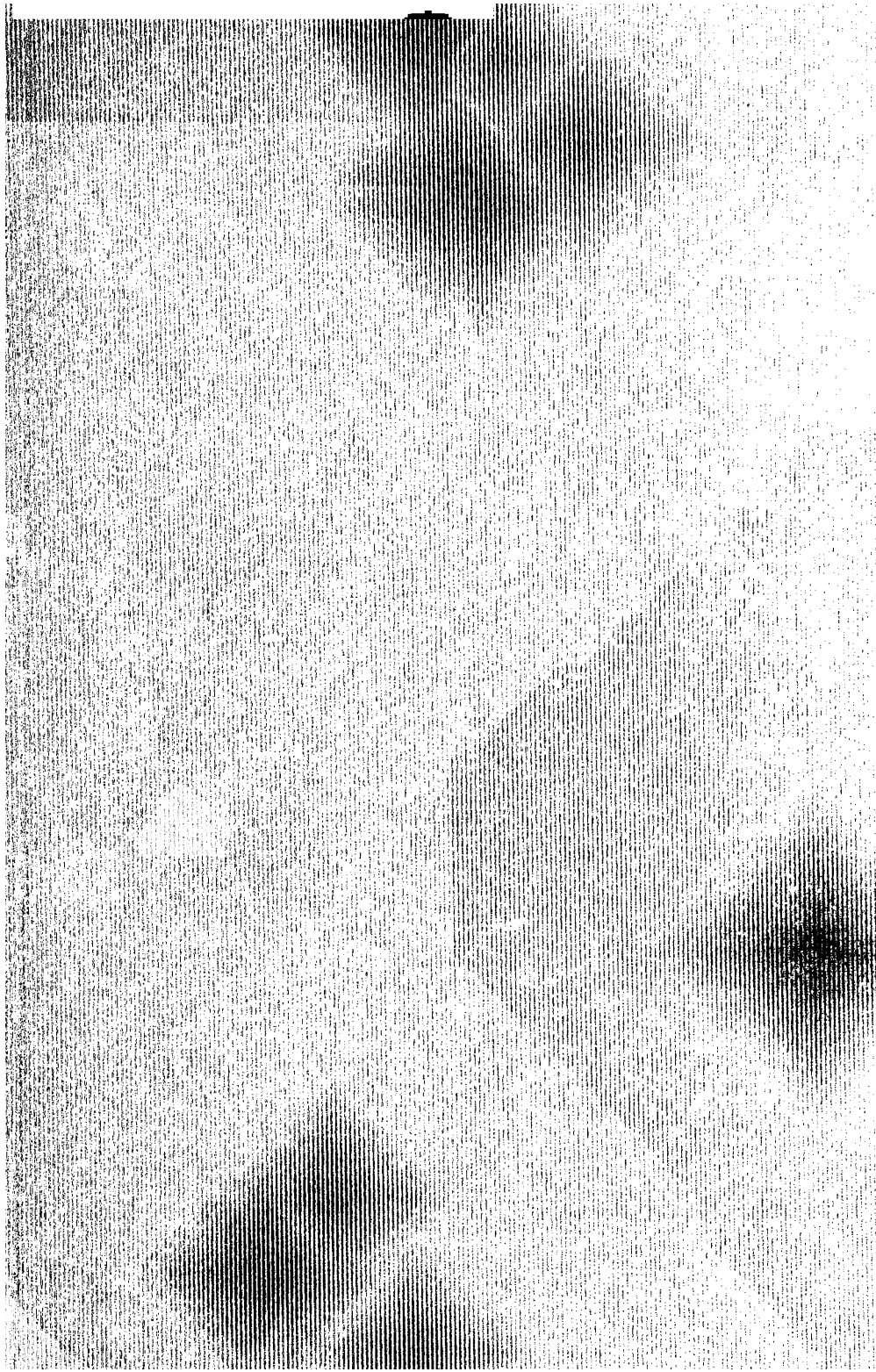
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



**LIFE AND ART
OF
RICHARD MANSFIELD**

WORKS OF WILLIAM WINTER

THE QUEEN'S DOMAIN
SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND
GRAY DAYS AND GOLD
OLD SHRINES AND IVY
BROWN HEATH AND BLUE BELLS
THE ACTOR, AND OTHER ORATIONS
SHADOWS OF THE STAGE: I
SHADOWS OF THE STAGE: II
SHADOWS OF THE STAGE: III
 (Others in Preparation)
THE PRESS AND THE STAGE
LIFE AND ART OF EDWIN BOOTH
LIFE AND ART OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON
WANDERERS. (Poems)
BRIEF CHRONICLES. Being Lives of Actors
A WREATH OF LAUREL. Addresses
HENRY IRVING IN AMERICA
STAGE LIFE OF MARY ANDERSON
A DAUGHTER OF COMEDY
THE THEATRE AND THE PUBLIC, AND OTHER
 ORATIONS
JOHN McCULLOUGH. A Memorial
LIFE OF JOHN GILBERT

OTHER DAYS
OLD FRIENDS
POEMS. (Final Edition)
LIFE AND ART OF RICHARD MANSFIELD

LIFE OF RICHARD MANSFIELD



Cardinal Ruffini
From a portrait by W. M. S. S.

LIFE AND ART
OF
RICHARD MANSFIELD

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS LETTERS

BY
WILLIAM WINTER

**Truth speak for me.
I will remain the constant sanctuary
Of your good name.**

WEBSTER

VOLUME ONE

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY
1910



Richard Mansfield
From a portrait by J. L. Stein

11

8

WILLIAM WINTER

THE UNIVERSITY

1933

1933-1934

**COPYRIGHT, 1907, 1908, 1910, BY
WILLIAM WINTER**

All Rights Reserved

Published, February, 1910

TO
HERMAN H. KOHLSAAT
Because He Loved and Honored
RICHARD MANSFIELD
And by Him Was Loved and Honored
And Because My Book Will Be Enriched
By Association with His Name
I Dedicate This Memorial
Of a Fine Genius and a Brilliant Life

Friends through long years of pleasure and of pain
Nor Time nor Death itself can wholly part,
For here at Memory's shrine they meet again
In the sweet converse of the faithful heart.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface	13
CHAPTER	
I. 1854-1877	25
II. 1877-1883	43
III. 1883-1888	50
IV. 1888-1890	83
V. 1890-1892	124
VI. 1892	157
VII. 1893	179
VIII. 1894-1899	219
IX. 1899-1906	256
X. 1906-1907	303
 Mansfield's Writings	 345
Erminia Rudersdorff	349
His Mother's Will	354
Beatrice Cameron—Mrs. Mansfield	357

ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOLUME ONE.

Richard Mansfield	Frontispiece
<i>From a Portrait by S. L. Stein.</i>	
	FACING PAGE
Mansfield as <i>Baron Chevrial</i>	28
Facsimile, from Mansfield's Notes for This "Life"	34
Richard and Felix Mansfield, About 1862	36
Richard Mansfield, About 1877	44
Facsimile: Playbill of "The Pirates of Penzance"	46
Mansfield as <i>Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.</i>	48
<i>From a Pen and Ink Drawing by Himself.</i>	
Richard Mansfield in 1885	56
Robert Louis Stevenson	68
Tomasso Salvini as <i>Othello</i>	74
Mansfield as <i>King Richard the Third</i> (Act III.)	80
Henry Irving in 1888	90
Eben D. Jordan	106
Richard Mansfield in 1889	114
Mansfield as <i>Glo'ster</i> ; Beatrice Cameron as <i>Lady Anne</i> , "Richard III."	122
George Brummell, the Famous Beau, in Youth	132
Beatrice Cameron—Mrs. Mansfield	154
Mansfield and His Son	156

	FACING PAGE
Augustin Daly in 1892	168
Richard Mansfield in 1892	178
Ellen Terry as <i>Portia</i>	192
Edwin Booth	212
Mansfield as <i>Napoleon Bonaparte</i>	222
Mansfield in 1895	234
E. M. Holland	240
Albert M. Palmer	244
Richard Mansfield in 1898	254
Edmond Rostand	260
Richard Mansfield	264
"The Grange," Mansfield's New London Home	268
Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield at "The Grange"	278
Richard Mansfield in 1905	288
Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield and George Gibbs Mansfield	298
Richard Mansfield	308
Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield in the Garden, at "The Grange"	318
Richard Mansfield at His Home in New York	322
Richard Mansfield in 1906	330
Richard Mansfield—His Last Photograph	342
Mme. Erminia Rudersdorff	350
Mrs. Mansfield and George Gibbs Mansfield	358
Mrs. Mansfield and Her Son in 1908	360

PREFACE.

RICHARD MANSFIELD earnestly requested me to write his LIFE, I promised to do so, and this book is the fulfilment of my promise. My acquaintance with him extended over a period of about twenty-five years, and during the greater part of that time my association with him was that of intimate friendship, only once seriously disturbed, and then only for a little while, although more than once he became incensed with me, and freely and even rudely expressed his dissatisfaction. He was a man of unquiet, undisciplined, impulsive, imperious mind, intent on personal aggrandizement, the acquisition of wealth and fame, and he was so impatient of delay in the fulfilment of his purposes that he scarcely ever allowed a moment of peace either to himself or any person near him; but, while he was sometimes a trial to patience, he was, essentially, a practical exemplar of devotion to high ideals, an active instrument of virtuous intellectual force, and therefore a potent, influential character, worthy of respect and sympathy in life, and of thoughtful commemoration, now that he has passed away. Such commemoration it is the design of this memoir to provide.

The chronicle of Mansfield's career tells the story of a man of aspiring genius who, during many years and against

many obstacles, strove for the achievement of noble results in the administration of the Theatre; gained brilliant victories; encountered grievous disappointments; and, after a gallant struggle, died, exhausted in the endless contest that seeks to make intellect triumphant over materialism and the great art of acting a prime incentive to refined civilization and therefore to public happiness. That chronicle involves narrative of varied and picturesque theatrical industry, analysis of a singularly complex and interesting personality, and the presentment of an image of endeavor, endurance, persistence, and fidelity that ought to prove instructive and stimulative, especially to every sincere votary of the Stage. Writing to me, immediately after the death of the illustrious actor Henry Irving, Mansfield said: "I think that Irving's end was very enviable: it was best so, and is always best so." Irving died at his post, worn out by continual, conscientious, devoted, magnificent labor, in the service of his profession and of the public welfare. Mansfield met with a kindred fate, resultant from a kindred cause, for he was impelled by a like ardor of motive and by the indomitable spirit which is always saying to itself: "Think nothing done while aught remains to do."

It was remarked by that close observer and sagacious judge of human nature, the historian Macaulay, that "biographers, and indeed all persons who employ themselves in illustrating the lives of others, are peculiarly disposed to the disease of admiration." That truth has admonished

me of the wisdom of restraining my enthusiasm, and of allowing the subject of this memoir to speak for himself, wherever possible, revealing his character, and describing his conduct, directly to the reader, through the medium of his Letters. Those compositions are numerous, for his industry in letter-writing was incessant and exceptionally productive. To me and to members of my family he wrote more than five hundred letters, some of which have been destroyed, but many of which, because intrinsically interesting, have been preserved. Some of those letters, either in full or in part, have been woven into the strands of this narrative, and they will be found especially illuminative of the mind, the feelings, and the experience of their writer. Confidence has been scrupulously respected. In some instances the names of persons still living, or of those whose near relatives are still living, have been omitted, for while it has been my purpose to depict Mansfield as he was, it has been my earnest desire to avoid causing pain or just resentment. Mansfield, in his condemnation of individuals, was sometimes more explicit than judicious: on other occasions his justice was not less commendable than his candor. Most of my letters to him have, unfortunately, been destroyed or lost: they would have been useful in this work. The few of them that appear in it were kindly furnished to me by Mrs. Mansfield, to whose courtesy also I am indebted for use of the originals of various illustrations with which these volumes are embellished. For other pictures I am indebted

to the kindness of that scholastic enthusiast of the drama and unwearied collector of theatrical annals and relics, Evert Jansen Wendell.

This book does not contain anything that has been derived, either directly or indirectly, from any previous narrative, by any other hand than my own, of the LIFE OF RICHARD MANSFIELD. It is essential that I should make this statement here, in order to protect myself from the possible imputation that my work is indebted to an already existing book about him, made by a person who has industriously explored my published writings, appropriated various thoughts of mine, sometimes used my actual words, and sometimes paraphrased them. My essays and comments on Mansfield's acting have been abundant within the last twenty-five years, and from those essays and comments, and from many theatrical records of mine, some in manuscript, some dispersed through "The New York Tribune," "Harper's Weekly," "The Saturday Evening Post," and other publications, I have drawn whatever would serve the purpose of this memoir. My principal authority for statements of biographical fact is Mansfield himself,—his communications to me having been ample and particular. I have verified them, whenever necessary. Many details, which are valuable for the guidance of a biographer, would be tedious if set forth for a reader. I have followed Mansfield's account of his ancestry, but have not deemed it necessary to descant, in detail, on his relatives or on domestic incidents of his boyhood,—themes which, in almost

all memoirs, are trite and insipid. From the day of our first meeting, when he was introduced to me by our affectionate friend the late Col. E. A. Buck, until nearly the day of his death, Mansfield habitually consulted me relative to his schemes and ventures, and, referring to his professional career, it pleased him to say, "I am your dramatic godson." His authorization of the biography which I have written was expressed thus: "I wonder if you would care to undertake a Biography? It might interest some persons, and much in my early life was strange. It should prove interesting. I think a book on the Life of R. M., from your pen, might sell well. I do not know—but I think so"; and later, when I told him I had already planned the book, he wrote: "I am tremendously excited about your writing the Life of R. M. It is better than being knighted! If I am alive next year I propose to invite you to go abroad with me. We will travel over the ground together, foot for foot; all the places I lived in, and was beaten and starved: my grandfather's vineyard: he was the friend of poets: my old Aunt—still living—a 'Grand Lady': the school at Yverdon; at Bourbourg; Derby—O, well, it will be great and glorious!" Had he lived, that dream, perhaps, might have been realized. My work certainly would have been enriched by some excellent pictures, for it was planned that special portraits should be made of him, in all his characters (in some of them he was never photographed), and that they should not be reproduced except in this book.

Infirmities are common to human nature, and the philosophic mind discounts them, as a matter of course. The virtues of human nature are the attributes of it most essential to be observed and recorded. I believe that Mansfield's virtues are fully shown in this memoir, and that they are made the more conspicuous because displayed in contrast with his defects. At times he was the object of harsh criticism and rancorous censure. I have judged it right, knowing him to have been a good man and a great actor, and so depicting him in these pages, not to ignore his faults and errors, nor the censure that sometimes followed him. In other words, I have tried to write a LIFE and not a EULOGY; and if my recorded estimate is incorrect the inaccuracy must be ascribed not to lack of knowledge but to lack of judgment.

Analysis of the subjects that an actor selects for illustration upon the stage is an essential part of the portraiture of his acting and a valuable index of his mind, and therefore, in the division of this biography which is devoted to Mansfield's ART, the plays that he presented are particularly examined and described.

The minute Chronology of the actor's Life, which is appended to the narrative, and in which are included the Casts of Characters of all the principal plays with which he was associated, will be found useful to those students of theatrical history who chance to desire particular information on this subject, for the purpose of reference when in haste. The making of it has exacted much labor.

There are a few repetitions of dates in these volumes, and they are intentional,—as they save the reader the trouble of referring from one volume to the other in order to ascertain the time of the event recorded or discussed.

Information has been afforded to me,—and the kindness is here gratefully acknowledged,—by the learned theatrical antiquarian, John Bouvé Clapp, of Boston; the eminent actor, Johnston Forbes-Robertson; the distinguished musical critic, Dr. Henry E. Krehbiel; the veteran journalist, Francis M. Stanwood; the literary connoisseur, Albert H. Whitin, of Whitinsville, Mass.; and Mrs. Stephen D. Stephens, who, in her girlhood, was for some time a pupil of Mansfield's mother, Mme. Erminia Rudersdorff, and resident in her home, at Berlin, Mass. Letters that were addressed by Mansfield to that great theatrical manager, Augustin Daly, have been kindly placed at my disposal by the honored jurist, Joseph F. Daly, Augustin's brother and executor. I would also express my gratitude to my son, William Jefferson Winter, for valuable suggestions and for practical help in the laborious research essential to a comprehensive scheme of authentic biography.

The present epoch is one of materialism and luxury. Triumph in the doing of great artistic deeds, the dramatic illustration of great subjects, the stimulative, cheering exposition of the splendid possibilities of spiritual human development in the ministry of beauty, has never been easy, and it is more difficult now than once it was, when wealth was less abundant and life less sophisticated. The genius

that conquers in our time must be fortified by indomitable will, steadfast endurance, tireless industry, and irresistible charm. Our time was Mansfield's time, and although he was worn out by the struggle, and although he sacrificed his life in the conflict, he diffused an abiding influence that should cheer and animate the disciples of intellect, and he gained an honorable fame that will long endure. If there were only half a score of actors possessed of such genius and ability as that of RICHARD MANSFIELD, and animated by such a profound, passionate devotion to the art of acting as that which glowed and burned in him, our Theatre, in this day of scientific prodigy and seemingly miraculous possibilities, would show a ripeness and splendor of accomplishment such as the world has never seen.

The completion and publication of this LIFE OF MANSFIELD have been long delayed, partly because of the intervention of other tasks and duties, but chiefly because of solicitude as to the obtainment of truth and as to the right expression of right conclusions. The responsibility of a biographer is great toward the living,—for, as remarked by Landor, “more can be said in one minute than can be forgotten in a lifetime,”—but it is even greater toward the dead, for they can no longer speak for themselves.

W. W.

December 1, 1909.

*Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither.
Ripeness is all.*

—SHAKESPEARE.

*He strives against the stream, nor can his power reverse
the first decrees of fate.*

—CERVANTES.

*The public are always anxious to know the men who
have left behind them any image of their minds. The
most scanty accounts of such men are compiled with dili-
gence and perused with eagerness; and the student of every
class may derive a lesson from the lives most similar to
his own. Every man who rises above the common
level has received two educations; the first from his
teachers; the second, more personal and more important,
from himself.*

—GIBBON.

*The worst way in the world to win fame is to be too
anxious for it.*

—ADDISON.

*He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below.*

—BYRON.

*Whoso conquers the world,
Winning its riches and fame,
Comes to the evening at last,
The sunset of three score years,
Confessing that love was real,
All the rest was a dream.*

—E. C. STEDMAN.

THE LIFE OF RICHARD MANSFIELD.

I.

1854 TO 1877.

THE essential part of the story of an actor's life, when, having achieved eminence and made himself important to his generation, he has passed away, is the record of his intellectual development; his progressive mental and spiritual experience, as revealed in his impersonations of great characters in dramatic literature. In proportion to an actor's knowledge of human nature and human experience,—knowledge that he has assimilated through observation, thought, and suffering,—is the value of his artistic impartment to the world. Richard Mansfield was, from boyhood, intensely ambitious, and it was his ambition to excel in the realm of art. His youth was one of vicissitude and of considerable hardship. His purpose, at the outset, was indefinite. He tried other paths before he entered upon the path of the stage; but, once entered upon that path, he

found himself in his natural vocation, and he launched himself, heart and soul, upon the struggle for conquest and eminence. He was not at any time a person of wayward life, pursuant of pleasure and careless of opportunity. He was earnest, diligent, and faithful,—improving every chance of winning distinction that came within his reach, and he thoroughly earned and entirely deserved every laurel that ever was awarded to him. The development of his mind was that expansion of the intellect which accompanies the gradual predominance of a noble, chastened spirit over the trials, misfortunes, and sorrows inseparable from life. Recognition, not praise, is the ordained craving of the artistic nature, and it is only when that nature becomes utterly embittered and cynical that the desire for recognition dies. That desire never died in Richard Mansfield. The highest attribute of his acting was imagination, and, next to that attribute, came humor,—in which his mind was uncommonly rich. He had a kind heart, and, by nature, he was magnanimous, of a sweet disposition, earnestly wishful to be loved, and exceedingly susceptible to kindness. His temper, however, was splenetic and impetuous, and, as his nervous system had been impaired by long-continued labor, many disappointments, and the annoyance con-

Missing Page

Missing Page



Courtesy of Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger

MANSFIELD AS *BARON CHEVRIL*

From the Original Painting by Louis Kronberg

life in Paris so common in our theatre within the last thirty years. The part was that of *Baron Chevrial*, a wealthy banker, who lives for sensual pleasure, avows the doctrine of materialism, is radically selfish, rapacious, licentious, epicurean, and cruel; and whose employment, in the dramatic fiction, is the crafty pursuit of a discontented wife, whom he is the means of driving to ruin, and of a ballet-girl, by whom he is beguiled, and in whose presence, and the presence of other votaries of pleasure, he dies, horribly, stricken with apoplexy. It would be difficult to conceive of a character more hateful than that of *Baron Chevrial*, or of circumstances more loathsome than those in which he is implicated. Nothing was expected of the actor. He took the town by surprise. His make-up for the rickety sinner was seen to be a marvel of fidelity,—suggesting, in many careful details, the premature decrepitude of an almost senile profligate. His horrid, cheerful, cynical exultation in sensuality and in vicious enterprise seemed to exert a sort of infernal charm, attracting even while it repelled: and his defiant audacity and tremendous fortitude of will, at the crisis of the banquet and in the death-scene, made the part splendid, even in its odious ignominy. The audience was astonished; the performance made a profound impres-

sion; and from that achievement it might have been divined,—and by some observers it was divined,—that the young actor was destined to peculiar and exceptional eminence.

Mansfield, it should be said, was not responsible for the introduction of “A Parisian Romance” to the American stage. It subsequently became known, indeed, that his first appearance as *Chevrial* was one of those singular accidents that have had so much influence in moulding histrionic fortunes and making stage history. Mansfield, poor and comparatively unknown, had for some time been wishful to obtain employment under the management of A. M. Palmer, at the Union Square Theatre, then a popular and prosperous house. Coming to New York, from Baltimore, where he had been performing in comic opera,—December, 1882,—he obtained the coveted engagement, and, the “Romance” being in rehearsal, he was cast for the minor part of *Tirandel*. The part of *Chevrial* had been assigned to that fine actor the veteran James H. Stoddart (1827-1907), who held a leading position in Mr. Palmer’s stock company, and Stoddart, after some hesitation, had wisely declined it, as one unsuitable to him because “out of his line.” Mansfield, meanwhile, better qualified for such a character than the elder comedian, had discerned

possibilities in it which were imperceptible to his professional associates, and when he heard that Stoddart had refused it he earnestly solicited the vacant opportunity. His request was granted,—somewhat reluctantly, as long afterward he told me; saying, also, that no one surmised his intention to make it prominent, or possessed any notion of the treatment of it upon which he had determined, and that no one was more surprised than the manager was, by the exceptional success which attended his performance.

Opportunity, a precious thing and justly celebrated alike in poem and proverb, is useless except to those persons who are prepared to improve it. Mansfield, an actor by inheritance and by training, was admirably fitted to seize the golden chance. From his childhood he had been educated in the art of expression. His mother, Erminia Rudersdorff, highly distinguished on the musical stage of her day, early began to instruct him in the elements of music and drama. He was quick to learn and he never forgot. He once told me that it was part of his morning study, every day, to practise with the voice, producing a series of tones and inflections, so as to develop and acquire complete control of it; and also to practise, before a mirror, the art of showing various emotions by means of facial play. One of his tasks,

enjoined by his mother, and emblematic of all, was to tell, by flexibility of expressive feature, the story of the experience of a child who has been promised the pleasure of a drive in the park, on a summer morning, in case the weather should prove fine. The child stands at a window, eagerly looking for the carriage, which, presently, to his great joy, arrives. Then the clouds gather and the sky is darkened. Then the rain begins to fall; the carriage is dismissed and driven away; the scene becomes cheerless; there can be no drive; disappointment has intervened, and joyous expectancy is changed to rueful grief and reluctant submission. Then, slowly, the clouds drift away; sunshine floods the air; the carriage returns; the world is bright again; and the child is happy. All that was to be indicated, in the face, by continually changing expressions. Other stories were invented, to be told in the same manner: obviously an ingenious and excellent method of developing and guiding the dramatic instinct.

The birth of Mansfield occurred at Berlin, Germany,—his parents having arrived at that city, in the course of their travels,—in 1854. Since his death the year of his nativity has been variously stated. He more than once mentioned to me the correct date, and the following letter that he wrote confirms the information:

Private Car 403. Buffalo.

February 26, 1906.

My Dear Winter:—

I have made the announcement of my retirement in three years—if all goes well I shall then be a wealthy man (as we professional men go), and there will be no necessity to keep up this awful and incessant high pressure. I cannot expect to retain forever what powers I possess, or to draw the people, and big productions year after year would finally result in impoverishing me. Also I begin to feel, in no small degree, the strain. *Three years from now* I shall be 55, (confidentially), and that is time to stop and enjoy life a little. At present it is all work—monotony and loneliness (which people are unable to understand).

I hope to be able to produce "Macbeth" next year. Do you know ———? Could she play Lady M?

All my love to you!

RICHARD.

Mansfield came of an artistic lineage and he was an artist by inheritance as well as by education. His maternal grandfather, Joseph Rudersdorff, was a musician of fine ability and of distinction, and also he was a man of erratic character. In speaking of him to me Mansfield said that he was prominent as one of the earlier conductors of musical festivals at Norwich and Worcester, England, and that some of his musical compositions, which were much admired, had been ascribed to Mendelssohn. Mansfield's father, Maurice Mansfield, an Englishman, possessed of various accomplishments, was esteemed an able critic of the arts and an expert

player on the violin. He died in 1859, when his boy Richard was only five years old, and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, London. The infant Mansfield, whose parents resumed travelling soon after his birth, was carried from Berlin to the island of Heligoland, a casual mention of which circumstance caused the incorrect statement, frequently published during his lifetime, that he was born there. He told me that, a fierce storm arising, as his parents were embarking to leave that island, he was forgotten and left in a bureau drawer, which had been utilized as a cradle for him, and that, after his father and mother had gone aboard the ship, he was rescued, wrapped in an oil-skin, and carried in a small boat to the vessel. That tale he must have derived from his mother, and probably it is true,—for the eccentricity of that singular woman had no limit. From Heligoland he was taken to England. During his boyhood he sometimes dwelt in London; sometimes in Jena, Germany; sometimes, as he told me, with his grandfather Rudersdorff; and he had singular incidents to relate of his juvenile experience,—incidents which, in familiar conversation, he would recount with caustic, satirical comment, and in a characteristic vein of grim, whimsical humor.

The treatment accorded to him in childhood and youth seems to have been, for the most part, harsh

* * * * * My father & mother
 were in their travels when I was born
 & was partly brought to life in Berlin
 & partly in Heligoland where a cradle
 was improvised in a chest of drawers,
 but a fearful storm arising I was
 forgotten & not rescued until my parents
 had sailed - I was carried out to the
 vessel in a small boat wrapped in
 an old skin coat. My father was a
 very fine critic & a wonderful
 performer on the violin - he died when
 I was 5 years old & he was buried
 in Kensal Green Cemetery (I think this
 the name) I have often visited the grave
 which is under a huge weeping willow
 My grandfather 'Auber's Druff' was a great
 musician & the first conductor I think of
 the Norwich & Worcester Festivals in England.
 He was very eccentric. Many of his compositions
 are attributed to Mendelssohn. * * * * *

FACSIMILE OF MANSFIELD'S NOTES FOR THIS "LIFE"

and injurious. His mother had sporadic moments of maternal tenderness, but from the first she was capricious and exigent, and he lived more or less at odds with her. His singularity, his precocity, and his exceptional talents,—early displayed,—no doubt, at times, pleased her; but she was unstable and of many moods; capable of affection, capable also of severity. Originality of character or superiority of mind asserting itself in childhood, sometimes offends more than it pleases,—as shown so well in the novel of “Jane Eyre.” Mansfield, distinctively original and peculiar, in maturity as well as in youth, inspired aversion in the minds of persons who could not comprehend him. An English governess, in whose charge he was at one time placed, when a child, seems to have been especially unkind to him. Indulging in reminiscence, he afforded to me an instructive glimpse alike of his boyhood and his character. “I was,” he said, “sometimes obliged to go into a garden where there were several large rooks. I was dressed in kilts and short socks. I had been warned, with a threat of severe punishment, not to molest those birds, no matter what they did; and they were very vicious. Why it should have been so I don’t know, but I seemed to inspire those feathered devils with as much dislike as ever the Boston critics felt for me. They seemed to know

that I could not defend myself, and they would croak with delight the moment they saw me, and would flutter about me, pecking my bare little legs, until the blood ran, or until I ran away howling. Mine was a hard life when I was a child. Sometimes I was scolded, sometimes beaten, and sometimes starved. Whatever I was meant to be, God knows it is not strange if I am what they call 'singular.' I sometimes think that the early wrench given to my mind by such treatment was the beginning of the sympathy I feel with such persons as *Glo'ster* and *Chevrial*. They are wicked, but they are courageous; they have seen the selfishness of the world,—and they *go on!* What they get they *compel*; the recognition they receive is for what they do for themselves; they are always lonely; they look through the motives of all around them, and no wonder they are cynical and cruel. There are times when I feel so barred out by the world, and so hated, that if I could push down the pillars of the universe and smash everything and everybody, I'd gladly do it!"

That indicates only one of his many and changing moods. As to the proceedings of those vicious birds: any person who, reading these lines, may chance to remember the huge, villainous rooks that formerly used to pervade the court-yard of the Tower of London, and, perhaps, are there now, will



RICHARD AND FELIX MANSFIELD
(*About 1862*)

1000

1

easily understand that the child had grave reason to dread his feathered foes.

In boyhood Mansfield received some tuition, at Jena, Yverdon, Bourbourg, and Berlin, and finally at Derby, England, where he was treated with much kindness by the head master, Rev. Walter Clarke. That kindness he never forgot. His affection for his old teacher was constant and it was often manifested. Indeed, one of the most winning traits of Mansfield's character was fidelity of remembrance of kind treatment. Once, when I was about to sail for England, he gave to me a letter of hearty commendation to that good friend of his at Derby, urging me, at the same time, to visit the school and deliver an address on Acting: and, he added, "Tell them something about *me*. I was not very happy in England, when I played there; but at the school they treated me kindly, and I would like them to know that one of their 'old boys' really *is* doing something, —even though he had not much honor in London."

A glimpse of Mansfield's boyhood is afforded by the following letter, written by my old friend, the genial, accomplished Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, —a letter published by me, many years ago, in "The New York Tribune," of the staff of which newspaper I was a member, as dramatic editor and critic, from July, 1865, to August, 1909.

I have known him (Mansfield) since he was a youth, at his mother's home in London, and it was no surprise to me when I heard of his success on the stage, in "A Parisian Romance" first, and afterward in "Prince Karl." The son of such a mother could scarcely be anything except a genius. She was a magnificent woman and a great artiste; a dramatic singer of superb power and skill. When I was seeking artists for the Boston Jubilee, in 1872, Mme. Rudersdorff was recommended to me as the best exponent of oratorio singing, and I found her a superb artiste. She filled my idea of queenliness. The Rudersdorff method in singing is still in vogue. I was at her home in London, where she lived in splendid style and entertained lavishly. Richard was only a boy then, but he was bright as you find 'em, and it was no surprise to me that he shot out like a meteor and dazzled New York when he got the chance. His road to success was not an easy one, however. One would think that, with an artiste mother, the stage would be thrown open to him, but it was not. Mme. Rudersdorff, who was a Russian, while Richard's father was an Englishman, had no idea of devoting her son to art, but designed him for mercantile pursuits, and, having settled in Boston, he began dabbling in drawing and painting, and showed so much talent that his mother sent him to Europe (1877) to pursue his art studies. The stage was his fate, however, and he spent more time in the foyer than in the studio, and finally determined to adopt the profession. His mother so strongly opposed this new venture that she cut off his allowance, and he was adrift in London, without any one to depend upon. He stayed there two or three years, with the entrée to good society, and with devilish little in his pocket. He has told me that, some days, about all he ate was what he got from the "spreads," at receptions and parties. He is a capital entertainer, though, and was in demand. One of his most intimate friends was a son of Hepworth Dixon, who did him several good turns. He got him into the company of a popular entertainer. Stage-fright and discouragement got

the upper hand of him, and he failed. He was bounced. D'Oyly Carte had a competitive examination for a comic opera, to play the provinces in "Pinafore"; Mansfield tried for the Admiral's part. Gilbert and Sullivan and several celebrities were present at the examination, and when it came Mansfield's turn to sing he said he would sing a duet, and he did. He sang a soprano and barytone duet, and they kept him singing and imitating for half an hour. Carte had the part fixed for a friend, but a countess, who had been an intimate friend of Richard's mother, interposed on his behalf, and obtained him the place. It was worth \$15 a week, and he kept it until he struck for higher wages. That was *treason*! Then he went to New York, and—I guess you know the rest.

About 1872-'73 Mansfield was brought to America, his mother having established her residence in Boston and bought a farm at Berlin, near Fitchburg. There he passed his youth,—sometimes at his mother's city home; sometimes at her rural mansion, an abode which the singer had adorned with many works of art, the garnered treasures of her active professional life; and sometimes in lodgings, when domestic dissension had become unendurable. The country house, with all the precious possessions that it contained, was, in 1881, destroyed by fire,—thought to have been the work of an incendiary, in malicious resentment of some offense given by the owner. The education of Mansfield, though capriciously bestowed, was not neglected. At first he studied the art of painting, and, for a time, he tried

to practice it; but as a painter he was not successful. His fondness for that art, however, always endured, and in after life he applied his practical knowledge of it with much advantage, alike to the public and himself, in the vocation of the stage. For a short time he worked as a clerk, obtaining employment in the mercantile house of Eben D. Jordan, once a wealthy and prominent merchant, of Boston, who cordially liked him, and who always continued to be his friend; but that occupation soon grew distasteful to him, and he discarded it.

Meanwhile he had joined a dramatic society called "The Buskin Club,"—thus evincing his juvenile predilection for theatrical pursuits. There is, among his papers, a record of his having, at the age of fifteen, performed,—December 23, 1869,—in amateur theatricals, at the school at Derby, England; but his first considerable attempts at acting were made in Boston, when he was associated with "The Buskin Club." On February 9, 1876, at the Boston Globe Theatre, that society gave an afternoon performance, for the benefit of local hospitals, of T. W. Robertson's fine comedy of "School,"—Mansfield appearing in it, as *Beau Farintosh*. The performance had already been given, in a semi-private way. About the same time Mansfield gave a miscellaneous entertainment, at

a public hall, incidentally impersonating *Vincent Crummles*, the caricature of the "barn-storming" tragedian, drawn by Dickens, in "Nicholas Nickleby," and embellishing his monologue with mimicry and song. At one of his performances his mother was present, and she expressed the crisp opinion that her son was "making a fool of himself." Notwithstanding that she had trained her son in musical and dramatic expression, she was desirous that he should not adopt the profession of the stage. It is the common error of parents to suppose that they can live the lives of their children as well as their own. The elder Booth, for example, strongly objected to the adoption of the stage by his son Edwin, who, nevertheless, persisted in his course, and so became not only an illustrious leader but a great public benefactor. If the wish of Mansfield's mother had prevailed, the American Theatre would have lost one of the most brilliant figures by which it has been adorned in our time. Mansfield was not discouraged by the maternal disapprobation. While his mother censured, his comrades applauded, nor, as he was young and abounding in life and hope, can it reasonably be supposed that he lacked a consoling measure of his own approbation. The spell of the Theatre was potent upon him, and persuasive incentives to its pursuit could not have

been wanting. Boston, which during many years had been a thriving theatrical city, was especially so in that period. Much fine acting was to be seen there, in those days;—at the Museum, where that great comedian William Warren nobly maintained the authentic traditions of the stage; at the Boston Theatre, where Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, and other actors of a high order customarily appeared; and at the Globe Theatre, which had been auspiciously established for the fulfilment of the best ideals;—and Mansfield, it is certain, improved the opportunity of seeing it. The wonder is that he should have been, for an instant, diverted, as then he was, from the adoption of the stage. The hour of his choice, however, was yet to come.

II.

1877 TO 1883.

IN 1877 Mansfield left Boston and returned to London. He had grown weary of the restraints, annoyances, and dissensions incident to close personal association with his eccentric mother, and he wished to find freedom in a society more congenial to his taste than that by which his youth had been surrounded. His declared purpose was to study and practice the art of painting. In London he opened a studio. The productions of his brush, however, were not remunerative, and but for a regular allowance of money that he received from his mother he would have had no assured means of subsistence. The inclination for a stage career, always strong in his mind, now became irresistible, and he determined to be an actor. Once, in conversation, adverting to those early days, he told me that he found an opportunity of public appearance at one of the Music Halls, to "do a musical turn," and that he went on, and talked and sang, under the designation of *The Ravishing Roach*: also he said that he tried to perform, one evening, in place of

Corney Grain,—who had been taken ill,—in the entertainment given by Mr. and Mrs. German Reed (Priscilla Horton), at the Gallery of Illustration, but he was so overcome by trepidation and physical weakness that he utterly failed. Corney Grain, whom I very pleasantly remember, was one of the most drolly eccentric of men, having the lank figure and thin visage of *Don Quixote*, and also his kind heart, and he was a remarkably clever actor; so that the task of filling his place might well have discomfited a novice. Other and more serious reverses followed. As soon as his mother became aware of his theatrical proceedings she stopped his allowance, and he was reduced to such poverty that he had to resort to the expedient of giving entertainments at private houses, as an incident to festive social occasions. That experience of hardship was afterward skilfully utilized by him, in his touching play of “Monsieur,” the leading character in which, *André de Jardot*, is a young musician, of fine talents and elegant manners, impoverished and starving, in New York. Mansfield nearly starved, in reality, in London, for, strange to say, he could not obtain regular employment, and,—which is not strange,—he sedulously kept from his acquaintances all knowledge of his destitution. A friend of his, Mr. William Dixon, a talented and



RICHARD MANSFIELD

(About 1877)

FIRST REGULAR ENGAGEMENT 45

popular young man, son of W. Hepworth Dixon, editor of "The London Athenæum," had already commended him to various acquaintances, including several theatrical managers, and so it happened that presently he obtained an engagement to appear in comic opera, under the management of D'Oyly Carte, who chanced to be organizing a company to traverse the English provincial towns. That quizzical musical satire, "Pinafore," was then new to the theatre, and Mansfield had the good fortune to be cast for the part of *Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.*, in the performance of which he displayed signal talent. That was the beginning of his regular professional career.

The preliminary or novitiate part of that career presents no aspect of special interest. Mansfield was subjected to the same trials and he passed through the same ordeal of vicissitude to which all actors are subjected who begin in poverty and are obliged to endure "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and to make their way by their strength. Theatrical biography becomes monotonous in its recital of the afflictions to which struggling genius is almost invariably subjected at the outset of its pilgrimage toward the temple of fame. Mansfield, although he was strongly addicted to talking, and to writing letters, about himself (he

wrote several hundred of such letters to me), did not say much that was novel about his tours of the provincial towns of Great Britain, from the time when he joined D'Oyly Carte's travelling company to the time, 1882, when he returned to America. His first engagement with Carte lasted about one year. Then, having committed the sin of asking for an increase of salary (a sin that Mr. Gilmore ironically describes as "treason"), he was discharged by the manager, and he went back to London and to "hard times" in that capital,—perhaps the worst place on earth for any person to abide in who is poor. A period of pressing hardship followed, but late in 1879 he was again employed by D'Oyly Carte, and, beginning at Bristol, December 10, as *Sir Joseph Porter*, he made another tour of the provinces, performing in comic opera. At Paignton, in Devonshire, on December 30, he appeared as the *Major General*, in "The Pirates of Penzance," then first produced; a trial representation and for the establishment of copyright: the first regular performance of that piece, now so well-known and popular, occurred at the Opera Comique, London, April 3, 1880: it was acted in New York on December 31, 1879. In Mr. Carte's company and during the season of 1879-'80 he visited, among other places, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Liverpool, Manchester, Bir-

ROYAL BIJOU THEATRE,
PAIGNTON.

FOR ONE DAY ONLY,
TUESDAY DECEMBER 30TH,
AT TWO O'CLOCK.

AN ENTIRELY NEW AND ORIGINAL

OPERA

By Messrs. W. S. GILBERT and ARTHUR SULLIVAN, entitled

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE,
OR LOVE AND DUTY

Being its first production in any country.

MAJOR-GENERAL...	Mr. RICHARD MANSFIELD
THE PIRATE KING...	Mr. FEDERICI
FREDERICK (a Pirate)...	Mr. CADWALADR
SAMUEL } Pirates...	Mr. LACKNER
JAMES }	Mr. LEHAY
SERGEANT OF POLICE...	Mr. BILLINGTON
MABEL...	Miss PETRELLI
EDITH...	Miss MAY
ISABEL...	Miss K. NEVILLE
KATE...	Miss MONMOUTH
RUTH (Frederick's Nurse)...	Miss FANNY HARRISON

SCENE

ACT I. ... A CAVERN BY THE SEA SHORE.
ACT II. ... A RUINED CHAPEL BY MOONLIGHT.

Doors open at 1.30. Commence at 2.

Sofa Stalls, 3/-; Second Seats, 2/-; Area, 1/-; Gallery, 6d.

TICKETS TO BE HAD AT THE GERSTON HOTEL.

Conductor, Mr. RALPH HORNER. Acting Manager, Mr. HENRY BROOK.

PLAYBILL OF "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE"

Missing Page

only seven times. On December 26 a play called "The Fisherman's Daughter," by Mr. Charles Garvice, was produced at the Royalty Theatre, and Mansfield acted in it, as *Old Sherman*,—among his professional associates then being Frederick A. Everill, one of the most accomplished and proficient of the actors of that period, whom it was a privilege to see and whom it is a pleasure to remember. With the Royalty Theatre Mansfield continued to be associated until April, 1882, when he went to the Comedy Theatre, to play a minor part in M. Audran's bright opera of "The Mascotte," with which that house had been opened, on October 15, 1881. Adverting to Mr. Farnie and Mr. Henderson, with whom he had been associated at the Globe and at the Royalty, Mansfield, long afterward, talking with me, expressed strong aversion, and it is not improbable that those persons considerably contributed to the discomfort of his professional experience when he was striving to make his way in London at that time. In the summer of 1882, acting on the advice of his staunch friend, Eben D. Jordan, he left London and established his residence in New York. On September 27, that year, he appeared at the Standard Theatre (afterward the Manhattan, demolished in 1909) as *Dromez*, in "Les Manteaux Noirs," and on



Sir Joseph Porter. K. C. B

MANSFIELD AS SIR JOSEPH PORTER

From a Pen and Ink Sketch by Himself

October 28, on the same stage, he appeared as *Nick Vedder* and as *Jan Vedder*, in a musical version of the old play of "Rip Van Winkle." Later he was seen, in those characters, in Philadelphia. On December 18 he acted in Baltimore, appearing as the *Lord Chancellor*, in the opera of "Iolanthe." On December 20 he repaired to New York and joined the stock company of the Union Square Theatre, where, as already mentioned, he suddenly flashed upon public attention as an actor of exceptional power, in the part of *Chevrial*. From that time until nearly the end of his life he remained in the almost continuous practice of his profession.

III.

1883 TO 1888.

MANSFIELD'S success as *Chevrial* was decisive, yet it did not promote his rapid advancement. "A Parisian Romance" held the stage of the Union Square Theatre till April 7, 1883, when it was taken on a tour of the country. The season closed on May 26, in Boston, and Mansfield went to England, where he passed the summer. On September 10, having rejoined Mr. Palmer's company, he appeared in San Francisco, acting there for the first time, still in the part of *Chevrial*. The farcical play of "French Flats" was there produced, on September 20, and in that he acted *Rifflardini*. Mansfield told me that, later, in Chicago, by private arrangement with another player, he introduced into that performance the "business,"—long afterward effectively used by him in "Beau Brummell,"—of receiving from another hand several letters, in succession, smelling of each letter, commenting crisply on the respective perfumes exhaled by those missives, and, finally, saying to his interlocutor: "I don't know what that one is, but it's very unpleasant; you

may read them yourself." The introduction of that comic "business" without notice except to one actor who was in the scene with him, while it made his auditors laugh, gave annoyance to some of his professional associates, and especially to the older and more prominent comedian, James H. Stoddart, who, indeed, formally objected to the innovation, deprecating both the irregularity of its employment and the undue prominence that Mansfield obtained by it.

In the autumn of 1883 Mansfield left the Union Square Theatre Company, bought the rights to "A Parisian Romance," organized a company, and, on December 6, began his first "starring tour," appearing at the Park Theatre, Newark, New Jersey. In that venture he was partly sustained by his friend Eben D. Jordan. He did not succeed, however, and his attempt was soon abandoned. His next appearance was made at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, January 31, 1884, in a sentimental comedy by Mr. H. H. Boyesen, called "Alpine Roses,"—the love story of two blooming peasant girls, resident in the mountains of the Tyrol. Mansfield acted an adventurous nobleman, the *Count von Dornfeldt*, who, like the sailor in Dibdin's song, felt "How happy I could be with either, were t'other dear charmer away!" That play lasted till April 10. His proceedings during the rest of that year were

merely nomadic. On December 18 Lester Wallack produced, at Wallack's Theatre, a play by Henry Guy Carleton, called "Victor Durand," and on January 15, 1885, succeeding Mr. Lewis Morrison, Mansfield appeared in it, as *Baron de Mersac*,—a maladroit rascal, who imperils his safety by his irrational conduct. Mansfield contrived to personate him in such a way as to suggest sensible motive and in a specious, plausible manner, and commended him to sympathy by making him the sincere, impassioned, desperate lover of a woman by whom he is detested. "Victor Durand" held the stage at Wallack's till February 14. Leaving Wallack's company, Mansfield then joined a comic opera troupe, giving performances at the Standard Theatre, where he appeared as *Nasoni*, in "Gasparone." In the spring of 1885 he again visited London, and on June 22 he there participated, at the Princess's Theatre, in a private performance of "Gringoire," acting *King Louis XI*. On September 15 the Lyceum Theatre, in Fourth Avenue, New York, was opened, under the management of that erratic, enthusiastic genius and remarkable man, James Steele Mackaye (1842-1894) with a drama, adapted from a French original, Sardou's "Andrea," entitled "In Spite of All." Miss Minnie Maddern, now (1909) Mrs. Harrison Grey Fiske, finely personated

the heroine of it, and Mansfield acted in it, as *Herr Kraft*, a kindly, eccentric man of the world, whom he made effective by means of half earnest, half playful cynicism. That drama kept the stage till November 6 and it was then taken on a tour. Mansfield left the company in January, 1886, and accepted an engagement to appear, under the management of Mr. John B. Stetson, as *Ko-Ko*, in "The Mikado," at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, where his exuberant humor, combined with his brilliant ability as a musical artist, gained for him the general admiration and a decided access of popularity. The impersonation of *Ko-Ko* was many times repeated. During that engagement Mansfield accepted from A. C. Gunter the original draft of the play of "Prince Karl," and in April the first production of that piece was effected at the Boston Museum.

Mansfield, meanwhile, had felt disappointed and resentful because the general applause for his performance of *Baron Chevrial* was not immediately followed by a copious increase of practical prosperity; that is to say, of rapid professional advancement and large financial remuneration. His embodiment of *Chevrial* did, as was inevitable, increase his reputation as an actor: in fact, it marked him as an actor of exceptional ability and of auspicious

promise. But it is not possible that a permanent *popular* as well as artistic success, can be gained by the presentment of a character intrinsically repulsive. *Iago* would not carry the play of "Othello." Admiration is often yielded to expert, powerful embodiments of the theatrical *Pescaras*, *Ludovicos*, and *Stukeleys*, but not sympathy and not love. Many persons interested in dramatic art naturally wished to see Mansfield as *Chevrial*, because of the emphatic commendation that had been bestowed on the technical ability and startling effect of his performance; but, having once seen him in that part, few, if any, wished to see him in it again. It was not until he had appeared in several other characters, and had shown various pleasing and winning aspects of his nature, that he obtained a place,—in so far as he ever did obtain it,—in the public heart. That he deserved to obtain it,—his complex nature being rich in kindness, gentleness, charity, sympathy, and humanity,—there is no ground for doubt. But, while he merited and earnestly craved the affection of the public, he did not largely inspire it. He was loved by those who knew him well, in spite of vexing faults, and because of his intrinsic fundamental goodness, but he was not taken to the heart of the people as Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson were, in America, and as Henry Irving and John

Lawrence Toole were, in England. Moreover, it happened that his ultimate choice of principal parts to be represented,—a choice indicative, perhaps, of an inherent temperamental acerbity,—fell often upon characters which are, in general, repellent,—such as *Glo'ster*, *Shylock*, *Hyde*, and *Ivan*,—and it also happened that, in his professional intercourse with actors whom he employed, and also in speeches delivered before the curtain and remarks published in newspapers, he sometimes evinced irritable temper. His petulance, indeed, was momentary. His resentments, generally, were evanescent. His occasional incivility toward associate actors was not more harsh than that of several of the older worthies of the Theatre had been. He was not more aggressive and dictatorial, for example, than Macready, Forrest, Charles Kean, and Barry Sullivan. His expressions of dissatisfaction relative to the public and the press were never more explicit than those of some of his renowned predecessors in theatrical public life had been, and sometimes they were better warranted. But, as he lived in an age of multitudinous newspapers, when even the smallest of “small beer” was,—as it still is,—conspicuously chronicled, everything that he publicly said or did, together with much that he neither said, nor did, nor ever even thought of saying or doing, was

recorded and circulated,—diffusing, far and wide, an impression that he was continually fractious, combative, sullen, and morose. That was an erroneous and injurious impression: but it was entertained by many persons, and it clouded the popular understanding of him. To the end of his life that cloud was not, within his knowledge, entirely dispelled. His professional identification with grim characters would have been sufficient, in itself, to vitalize such an error. A few of the parts that he played are sweet and winning, but most of them, and those especially in which he was most effective, contain more of repulsion than of allurements, and it was in the exposition of wicked power more than in the exercise of pacific charm that he found his advantage and gained his renown.

Thoughtful examination of Mansfield's professional career at once impels inquiry as to the place in dramatic art that should be allotted to things that are gruesome or terrible, and opens the old, perplexing controversy as to artistic use of ugliness and beauty. In the vast, incomprehensible scheme of creation evil appears to be as necessary as good is. If there were not the one there could not be the other. Life is a struggle between good and evil, and it is through the victory of good over evil that everything great and glorious is produced.



RICHARD MANSFIELD IN 1885

*From a Rare Photograph in the Collection of
Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

In what proportion those antagonistic elements ought to be mingled and contrasted, in a work of art, dramatic or otherwise, judgment often finds it difficult to determine. There are, however, cases in which instant decision becomes readily possible. Monstrous and hideous things exist, that ought never to be included or considered in a play for public presentation. When *Cornwall* plucks out the eyes of *Glo'ster* and casts them on the ground, exclaiming "Out, vile jelly!" the reader of "King Lear" is repelled with a sickening consciousness of disgusting atrocity: the spectator of such a proceeding, seeming to be literal, would be convulsed, not with terror but with loathing. There must be a limit somewhere. Unmitigated horror or monstrosity is absolutely barren of valuable result. One of the best examples of the wrong use of evil, in a play, is "Titus Andronicus,"—that sickening rag of pollution attributed to Shakespeare. One of the best examples of the right use of evil in a play is the melodrama of "The Lyons Mail." Mansfield presented controversial examples, in *Jekyll* and *Hyde*, in *Ivan*, in *Rodion*, and in *Nero*; but it was not to be reasonably expected that those presentations, however finely displayed, would enlist the affection of mankind.

The interval between Mansfield's striking achieve-

ment as *Chevrial* and his more determinate success as *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde*,—a period of upwards of four years, extending from January, 1883, to the autumn of 1887,—was one of incessant effort and continuous activity, but it was entirely formative. His fortunes fluctuated, being sometimes propitious and sometimes adverse. The part of *Prince Karl*, which he acted for the first time on April 5, 1886, at the Boston Museum, although he did not highly value it, either then or later, helped to advance him in public favor. From May 3 to August 14, 1886, he acted at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, giving 117 successive performances of that part. It was not, however, until he had made a decisive hit with the drama of “*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*” that he gained an authoritative position in the broad field of theatrical enterprise, and at last was able to assert himself in active competition with the potential leaders of the stage. That play was first presented on May 9, 1887, at the Boston Museum, and in the following autumn, after it had undergone severe revision, it was brought out, September 12, at the Madison Square Theatre, New York. Mansfield’s New York engagement, that year, began on May 30 and ended on October 1. The opening play was again “*Prince Karl*,” but, though cordially received, it did not continue to be

remunerative and presently he felt the urgent need of a fresh attraction,—as the following letter, addressed to me at the time, may signify:

The Victoria, New York,
May 27, 1887.

My dear old Friend:—

I am afraid I cannot come to you; I wish I could—I need an outing. But I am going to ask another favor of you—I wish you to come to me. In complete despair, and knowing that I *must* have a play at once, I have sat down and written one myself—two acts of it at least, and I want your judgment and I *must* have it. I must see you to-morrow, Saturday, evening, or on Sunday. Pray do this for me. Perhaps the best way will be to come and dine with me to-morrow or Sunday, eh? Of course I do not intend to let my name be mentioned in connection with the work, even if you think well of it.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

W. W.

The play thus suddenly devised was soon completed, and on July 11 it was acted under the name of "Monsieur," Mansfield appearing in it as *André de Jadot*, and giving a bright, cheery performance, marked by characteristic touches of pathos and humor. He did not lack sympathy and encouragement, in the fulfilment of his task.

Victoria Hotel, July 7, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

Thank you very much for your kind letter; it cheered me. This weather and the constant strain is telling. I should not

be human were it not so. I am compelled, alas, to produce "Monsieur" next Monday. The people are thoroughly tired of "Prince Karl," and I do not blame them. I have been careful to take your advice and have called the play "a sketch in three acts"—it rehearses fairly well and I think it will hold the boards comfortably until the production of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," after which I hope never to have to return to *trash* again. Sunday evening next at seven o'clock we are to have our dress rehearsal! how would it suit you to come and see that, and avoid the crowd on Monday? Although, frankly, I would like you to come both on Sunday and Monday. It is terribly hard work in this summer weather—this endeavor to draw people into the theatre and when they do come I am astounded at their idiocy—and here I am asking *you* to do it! Well, at all events, you will know that I appreciate the size of the sacrifice. I have many things I wish to ask you. One is about *Henry Dunbar*. Try and come up to town, if not Sunday, surely Monday, and stay here afterward for your supper and a bed—you shall have the *coolest* bed in the house but the *warmest* reception. God bless you, dear old man—think of *me* as dropping, dropping, dropping gradually away and trickling off to join the great sea.

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

His intention that the authorship of "Monsieur" should not be made known was soon defeated. There was, indeed, no reason why he should have wished to keep it secret; but it was one of Mansfield's peculiarities that he shunned publicity as author, or even part author, of some of the most notable and effective works with which, as an actor, his name was associated. The play of "Monsieur," while

artificial and improbable, is a clever sketch, and on the occasion of its presentment at the Madison Square Theatre it pleased considerable audiences for more than two months.

The Westmoreland, New York,

August 29, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

I am sorry you had to run away the other evening, and I am sorry you were not feeling well. I hope it wasn't owing to the moments you spent listening to "Monsieur"? By the way, I have cut out the imbecile monologue—*coûte que coûte*, I will never do it again—I hate, loathe, and abhor it! I cannot tell you how much you have cheered me. I hope to see you very soon. Dr. J. & Mr. H. is underlined for the 12th.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

During the period that intervened between the production of "Monsieur," July 11, and the production of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the work of revising the latter play and preparing it for presentment largely occupied his attention. The first draft of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" had been made for him, more or less under his immediate advisement, by Thomas Russell Sullivan. The play had not entirely pleased his audience in Boston, yet he had faith in it and was resolute to push it to a further trial. He earnestly wished and requested that I should advise him as to the revision of it, prior to its presentment in New York, and

various letters on that subject passed between us, and occasionally we met and conferred about it. He was exceedingly anxious at that time, being wishful not only for immediate practical success,—as he was paying rent for the Madison Square Theatre at the rate of \$21,000 for four months,—but to build a strong repertory, with a view to the future. Some of his letters are pathetic in the denotement of his restless spirit and perplexed mental condition, and all of them are instructive in their revelation of his character; his variability; his weakness and his strength; and particularly his determination to excel. As the time drew near for the fresh venture with *Jekyll* and *Hyde* his anxiety steadily increased: success in that dual personation meant everything to him, for, already, he was meditating an English expedition as well as the American tour.

The Westmoreland, August 4, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

I sent you a note by messenger yesterday, immediately upon receipt of your kind letter—so as to save you, if possible, the trouble of coming to town. It is strange that as you did come you should have missed me. I was here all the afternoon and it appears you did not call until then—probably the people in this house whom you saw were unacquainted with my name. However, I am very, very sorry not to have seen you. I have been sick, for the last three days, and almost unable to act—the intense heat—the horrible stench from the open roads (what

an outrage it is!) and the hard work have contributed toward this result. I am absolutely fit for nothing. My new rooms are very pleasant—they are quiet and I am partially obtaining the rest I need. I am wondering now—when shall I see you? No doubt you are disgusted and won't try again. I ought to come to you—but I cannot for I haven't the time; my business in the morning and my acting at night take up most of my time. Still I should much like to see you, there are so many things I wish to say to you.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It is indicative of Mansfield's ceaseless activity that the labor of acting and singing at night, revising and rehearsing a new play by day, and attending to miscellaneous business were insufficient to satiate his industry. He now resumed the study of the Emperor Nero, and urged the dramatist whom he had employed to hasten the completion of a play on that character.

The Westmoreland, August 16, '87.

My Dear Winter:—

I hear nothing from you and I am so overworked I cannot come to you—I am compelled to rehearse "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and to have it ready, for as soon as the active opposition of the reopened theatres commences I may find my patronage not so large. It is also necessary now for me to play "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" here in September, as I have accepted a fortnight at the Chestnut Street Theatre, in Philadelphia, in October. I shall confine myself to three plays, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," *Chevrial*, and "Monsieur,"—discarding the stupid "Prince Karl."

Russell Sullivan is at work for me, on "Nero." He has

two Italian plays and a French play to assist him. I shall make my *Nero* largely humorous. I like the character—it affords me an opportunity for just the blending of serious—the tragic and the comic, which I intensely like.

Our rehearsals are always at 12.30. What do you say to attending a rehearsal—and we can make such alterations as you suggest the better then—and you too can judge better with the whole thing displayed before you in that way. It is asking a great deal, but it is your own fault if I feel that I can never offend you by asking much from you. Name your own day—and you will understand, of course, that our rehearsals are absolutely private and free from the intrusion of strangers.

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The Westmoreland,

August 22, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

How have I offended?—or have you not received my letter? I have been expecting to hear from you. Remember, do, that this continuous heat—and, alas, my health, have—what shall I say? rendered me almost incapable of anything but the work I am forced to do—and so when I would *like* to come to you I don't. Write to tell me when next you will be in town—spend the day with me—and I will put off rehearsals and all else. You *must* go over “Dr. Jekyll” with me, and there is so much upon which I need your advice. I am in a horrible state of uncertainty; come to help me out of it—only be sure to send me word when to expect you, so that, for Heaven's sake! I may not be guilty of *missing* you again. Pray let me hear from you at once.

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It was at all times difficult to make Mansfield understand that other persons often were heavily

burdened with exacting tasks and compelled to be quite as busy as himself. At the first opportunity, however, I called on him, discussed with him every detail of the play of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and suggested such changes as seemed desirable. Later I attended a rehearsal of it and wrote to him additional words of counsel and cheer, to which he replied:

The Westmoreland, New York,
September 2, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

Thank you for your kind letter, and thank you again for coming over here to listen to a dreary rehearsal. Your opinion has encouraged me immensely and I have not felt downhearted since. I have made the changes and adopted the suggestions you make in your letter. Even I have cast Miss Kate Rogers for the old hag *Rebecca Moore*. Emma Sheridan is still too weak to work.

It is quite impossible for me to play Dr. J. & Mr. H. next Saturday, simply because the scenic artists, although employing extra hands, can barely be ready by Monday.

The Dress Rehearsal will be on Sunday Evening, and if you care to come and accept a bed and all else here, you know how truly welcome you will be!

God bless you, and believe me

Sincerely and always gratefully yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

But his anxiety was not allayed. Troubles seemed to accumulate. The necessity continued for vigilant thought and strenuous toil. The summer weather

was oppressive and exasperating. The members of his theatrical company, as he satirically advised me, were as nervous as himself, finding frequent occasion to antagonize each other; so that the time of preparation for a peculiarly critical ordeal was anything but tranquil. He made no secret of his discontent:

The Westmoreland, New York,
Wednesday.

My Dear Winter:—

Another kind note from you. I need it. I am really worn out. Why are there no competent stage people in this country? The stage management—the every detail of the production—even to the purchase of trifles, I have to attend to myself! I am utterly worn out—for I was tired before I commenced the summer season. Pray for me! Yes, do come to the Dress Rehearsal, if you feel like it.

Kate Rogers did not turn out well as the hag, *Rebecca*, and I have had to change back again. Harkins is unteachable—he does what you suggest for a moment, but falls back into his own style the next. As for myself!—expect little from me but hard, hard work, for the present. I shall do the best I can under the circumstances, but my best will be far short of my own ideal. Let me know when to expect you.

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

One incident of a humorous character chanced, at this time, to intervene, slightly diversifying the monotonous complexion of care and strife. Robert Louis Stevenson was in New York in the summer of 1887, and I learned from Mansfield that

each of them made several ineffectual attempts to see the other. "It happened that he was not at home when I called on him," said Mansfield, "and it happened that I was not at home when he called on me. At last, one day, I was fortunate, as I thought. I sent in my name, and a person whom I understood to be Mr. Stevenson's adopted son presently appeared, and, after the customary exchange of civilities, said that Mr. Stevenson wished to know whether I had a cold, because, if I had, he could not venture to see me. I told him to tell Mr. Stevenson, with my kindest regards, that I had an exceedingly bad cold, which I should be most happy to communicate to him, and so took my leave. We did not meet. Later I heard that Mr. Stevenson had promptly left town—probably to escape infection,—and me!"

That incident is characteristic of Mansfield's eccentricity, but no words can express the humor with which he related it. The following letter, after mention of friendly counsel as to the production of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," then imminent, refers to that occurrence:

My Dear Winter:—

How am I to thank you for your kindness to me?! I will do my best to follow your advice, the wisdom of which I thoroughly appreciate. You are the only man I can turn to

for such help. It is impossible to do quite what you say, for I can only depend upon *myself* for stage-management.

I have *not* seen Mr. Stevenson and I do not *know* him. An acquaintance of his called at the theatre and asked for seats for his (Stevenson's) wife and sister, for the first night of Dr. J. & Mr. H., and said that Stevenson had instantly left town. It seems, however, that he is a great friend of Mr. Henley's—a man I do *not* think I should care for. When are you coming over? Sunday?

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The production of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was accomplished on September 12, with gratifying success. Public applause was abundant, and, in general, the press was favorable, in some cases even to the extent of enthusiasm. The fulfilment of my professional duty on the occasion, although a serious task, was an agreeable one, because it is always pleasant to see merit rewarded with recognition, to give praise where praise is due, and to contribute, though ever so little, to the encouragement of worthy endeavor and high ambition. The feelings of the actor, were, naturally, animated, and he was quick to express them.

The Westmoreland, Tuesday.

My Dear Winter:—

How am I to thank you and what can I say?!!! How *splendidly* you have proved your kindness and your friendship!

Such a criticism—such a magnificent review of my effort



Photograph by J. Notman, Boston

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

to please you above all others, is ample payment for all the work of latter years—it wipes out all disappointments and bitterness and above all it ENCOURAGES—it fortifies me—it makes me feel that with more hard work in the right direction (and I do not think you will permit me to go off on the wrong track)—I may ultimately succeed. I need hardly tell you what *you* know and what *you* meant! that you have to-day done more for me than any other man alive could do. You have my heartfelt gratitude and my absolute devotion. I must see you and speak with you; when and where shall it be?

Yours affectionately and gratefully,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

I understood that you could not come last night and yet I waited until three o'clock! Name *some* night this week and come to supper—it is the best meal, after all! The work is done and we draw nearer together.

The first run of “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” in New York lasted only from September 12 to October 1, when his season ended. The weather was exceedingly hot, and Mansfield suffered much from the heat and from the severe strain imposed on his nervous system by acting the dual part. His impersonation of *Hyde*, upon which, at that time, he customarily expended a disproportionate volume of physical exertion, greatly exhausted him. Also his mind was busy with new subjects, and he never rested,—either then or at any time, much as he longed for rest, and often as he spoke of it. Here is an example of the fevered condition in which he lived and labored, throughout this trying period.

226 Fifth Avenue, New York.

My Dear Winter:—

Will you name a day (that's a funny way to begin a letter!), when you think you will have the time and the inclination to run over "Dr. J. & Mr. H." with me? Try and make it soon, for I *must* rehearse my people.

I have made the alterations you suggested in the First Act of "Monsieur," and have also attended to the changes in wig, dress, etc. I cannot tell you how very glad I am for any suggestions from you.

What do you say to a week's *yachting*? I could charter a yacht, and join it after the play, stay aboard during the day—what do you say? I am run down—nervous—irritable—tired,—in fact *wretched*: it would be wonderful were it otherwise, with this strain upon me, and this terrible heat—what do you say? Shall I charter a comfortable yacht, and will you join me for a week? Write and tell me at once. And advise me.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

His statement of his condition was not exaggerated,—as this letter clearly indicates; and I think that the inducements offered to join a pleasure trip are among the most peculiar ever named!

The Westmoreland,

New York, September 22, '87.

My Dear Winter:—

The Doctor warns me that I am threatened with a nervous disease, likely to endanger my life! I cannot say that I care much—and in fact I have always shown such remarkable ability to recover from any drain upon my system, after a few weeks of rest, that I have no doubt I shall give the Doctor the lie. However, this "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is a disagreeable nightmare to me just now, and when evening comes I assure

you I am anything but happy. There can be no doubt that just at present I am in a very nervous condition. We must be able to change the bill often—but with dignity and credit to ourselves—and I feel that “Monsieur,” although well enough at the time, is not the thing. I must see you and consult with you over many matters. You know I have absolutely no one—no one but *you*—I am forced to appeal to you in all matters of importance. Can you come to town and if so what evening? When “Nero” is finished shall we work it over together, and then will you take a trip to the other side with me and help me? It would be delightful and I have set my heart upon it. We will take a couple of months or so and knock about England. We’ll go to the places you love best, we’ll see the best men in London likely to make the proper designs for us, for the dresses, scenery, and engage the proper people. All this is in your line and mine and we’ll return strong and well and with something worthy. What do you say? In the meanwhile what can I play that will rest me and yet be good? Something bright, light, airy, exquisite—not necessarily modern? Let me know when to expect you.

Your sincere and grateful friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Mansfield had determined to win the highest possible rank in his profession and he was now concentrating the forces of his mind, and all the concurrent intellectual and social aids that he could attract, upon the accomplishment of that purpose. His summer season had increased his prestige. In October he began a tour of the country, in order to earn the money necessary for the prosecution of his higher designs. The parts upon which he relied were *Chevrial*, *Prince Karl*, *André de Jadot*,

and *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde*; but he had resolved on acting *Nero*, he had already thought of adopting *Shylock*, and, secretly, he was studying *Glo'ster*, with a view to a splendid revival of "Richard III." The struggle now began in earnest, which was to grow more and more bitter, and was to end only, after many victories and defeats, in premature death. No observer will rightly appreciate Mansfield's formidable character, intellectual power, and persistent, tremendous labor, who omits to consider the theatrical conditions by which he was then confronted and the obstacles among which and over which he was obliged to make his way.

The tide of dramatic affairs, which, since about 1860, had been slowly rising, in both Great Britain and the United States, was, in that period, as high as it had ever been, or, probably, as it ever will be. Actors of the highest order were visible, in considerable number, on both sides of the Atlantic. The standard of taste was severe. The public, accustomed to superior acting, was so exigent that even exceptional ability, being generally deemed a matter of course, attracted no unusual attention. Commercial opportunity was ample, but the obtainment of specific recognition was difficult,—far more so than it is to-day. Competition was keen and

rivalry was fierce. The record of the period glows with illustrious names. Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett had joined their powers and were acting greatly, in great plays. Augustin Daly's star was at its zenith. His superb revival of "The Taming of the Shrew," with the regal Ada Rehan as *Katherine*, had been followed by his beautiful production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in which that great actress dignified the part of *Helena*, in association with the noble veteran Charles Fisher, and the delicate, exquisite comedian James Lewis. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, attended by a superb company, now in America and now in Great Britain, were on the golden crest of success, with one of the most varied and opulent repertories ever formed,—including "Macbeth," "The Merchant of Venice," "Faust," "Olivia," "Charles I.," "The Dead Heart," "Louis XI.," "The Bells," and "The Lyons Mail." The lovely Helena Modjeska, in the noon of her genius and beauty, now alone and now in association with Edwin Booth, was charming all eyes by her refined and finished interpretations of some of Shakespeare's loveliest and greatest women, and also was exerting her magnetic charm to chasten and exalt the sentimental drama of France. Jefferson and Florence, great comedians both, and, in alliance, illustrative of a

wide variety of talent and a wonderful depth of feeling and opulence of humor, were cöoperating, in a performance of "The Rivals" which was supremely delightful. Mary Anderson, at the summit of her bright career, filling her third English engagement at Irving's Lyceum, had, with *Hermione* and *Perdita*, charmed great assemblies in London, and afterward also in her native land. Genevieve Ward, acting *Stephanie de Mohrivot*, had exemplified, in comedy, an art that rivalled the white gleam of ivory, the strength of steel, and the glitter of the diamond. The inventive, expert, restless, vivacious spirit of Dion Boucicault flamed in many places, like *Ariel* on the haunted ship. Mrs. Bowers, with her facile art, passionate temperament, and strangely seductive voice, and Fanny Janauschek, the incarnation of massive tragic power, had made actual the great queens of a storied past, so that *Elizabeth Tudor*, *Catharine of Russia*, and *Mary Stuart* lived again. The great Italian actor Tomasso Salvini was traversing America, and everywhere impressing the general mind by his tremendous personality and superlative dramatic power, in *Saul*, *Samson*, *Conrad*, *Ingomar*, and *Niger, the Gladiator*. Other accomplished and famous Continental actors,—Constant Coquelin, Jane Hading, Possart, Barney, and Hedwig Nie-



Photograph by Lock and Whitfield, London

TOMMASO SALVINI AS OTHELLO

mann Raabe,—were repeating or excelling, on the American stage, the triumphs they had gained at home. The handsome, sparkling Fanny Davenport, the strange, nervous, febrile Clara Morris, and the dashing Rose Coghlan were in full career and wide popularity. That perfect comedian John Gilbert,—not in our day surpassed, if ever equalled, in his particular line,—was variously visible, sometimes in “The Abbé Constantin,” sometimes in “The School for Scandal,” or, with Jefferson and Florence, in “The Rivals.” Daly had effected his magnificent revival of “As You Like It,” and Ada Rehan was giving the most brilliant performance of *Rosalind* that our stage has known. The British Theatre had sent to America Charles Coghlan, and Mrs. Langtry, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Wilson Barrett,—acting in “Claudian” and in “The Silver King,”—and the consummate artist Charles Wyndham, acting in “Wild Oats” and in “David Garrick.” Among the miscellaneous actors of the period,—all able, all prominent, and all more or less engrossive of the public observation,—were F. C. Bangs, William H. Crane, John S. Clarke, Charles W. Couldock, Mrs. John Drew, Louis James, William LeMoyne, Milnes Levick, Steele Mackaye, F. F. Mackay, Maggie Mitchell, Stuart Robson, James H. Stoddart, Marie Wainwright, and Frederick Warde;

while among the leading men, of conspicuous talent, with whom Mansfield was, necessarily and unavoidably, compelled to come into professional contrast and, therefore, more or less sharp rivalry, were Kyrle Bellew, Maurice Barrymore, John Drew, J. H. Gilmore, Joseph Haworth, Robert Mantell, Eben Plympton, E. H. Sothern, and Otis Skinner: and not only was there a prodigal opposition of great professional ability; the repertories of the rival actors were, in almost every important instance, uncommonly rich, including every variety of drama, from tragedy to farce. Into the populous, glittering, combative arena thus indicated Mansfield projected himself, with an equipment that mostly consisted of his exceptional personality, resolute will, and insatiable ambition.

Incidents of Mansfield's tour, in the season of 1887-'88, plans that he considered, notions that he entertained or discarded, his moods, serious or humorous, and the varying movements of his ever active mind are indicated in many letters that he addressed to me during his absence, some of which are of sufficient interest to merit incorporation in this chronicle of his life. Before he left New York, in 1887, he had told me of his inclination to attempt *Shylock*, and had not received much encouragement, but I had suggested to him, as a good subject for

a play, the story and character of Beau Brummell. He went to Philadelphia on October 2. The dramatic season was one of much activity, and it was especially signalized by the advent of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, acting in "Faust." To those subjects there are various allusions.

October 6, 1887.

The Continental Hotel, Phila.

My Dear Winter:—

Whilst the "*critics*" here have been quite unable to say enough bad about us, the public, thank God, has supported us as well as they supported us in New York and Boston, and the financial showing is, therefore, a very satisfactory one, with all signs of an increasing success. We opened to the largest first night house of the season and have not fallen off since. Dr. Lamden's attack in "The Times" was quite brutal.

Can you send me an acting edition of "The Merchant of Venice" with your notes and business marked? Yes? It would be a great kindness and help me greatly.

I have had to break off here, tired and almost worn out—the weather has turned very, very warm and my consequent suffering has been great. I am praying for a change. The week has closed well and has brought me a handsome profit. How we shall do this week I do not know. Next week Hooley's Theatre, Chicago.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Stillman House, Chicago.

October 24, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

Thanks for your kindness and your good advice, which I will endeavor to follow.

I am glad the books pleased you. I only wish *I* could do something worthy of your kindness to me.

We played to very large business last week in Chicago—against Booth and Barrett, and other strong attractions. I received a very kind, charming letter from Booth, congratulating me—so like him. I do *not* think I shall play *Shylock*.

O, for a play!

I am tired and have caught cold. When you have time write to me. Tell me how to map out the four weeks at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, in New York. We commence December 19. When does Irving arrive in New York? I would like to send him a word of welcome.

God bless you,

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Can you tell me what week Irving plays in Boston?

Irving appeared at the Star Theatre, New York, on November 7 and ended his engagement there on December 10, appearing in Boston on December 12. His remarkable presentment of Wills's drama on the subject of Goethe's "Faust" necessarily received thoughtful attention.

Pittsburgh, Nov. 9, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

I have read to-day with keen relish your masterly essay on Irving's "Faust." I was delighted with the views you express. I was greatly obliged to you for your telegram which afforded me the opportunity to send a dispatch to Irving, wishing him all good things. How much I was delighted with his sweet and gracious reply I need not tell you.

I am more and more in love with the idea of "Beau Brummell." I have determined *not* to touch *Shylock*. If it is pos-

sible to have a play about Brummell I will have it. Tell me how to set about it? *Who will write it for me?* Can you obtain for me a life of Beau Brummell? Probably I could sketch the scenario *myself*. Above all I must have all the necessary authorities. May I task your friendship (being in the land of the heathen and the Turk myself), to obtain these books for me and to send them, C. O. D.? I am in Baltimore next week and in Washington the week following. Pray do this for me!

Sullivan writes to say that he is working hard on "Nero"—you may be sure I shall do nothing with it until I have submitted it to you.

I am in doubt about my New York and Boston engagements and also want your advice upon these points. I have rented the Fifth Avenue Theatre for four weeks commencing December 19th. *What* am I to commence with? The week before Christmas is notably a bad week—I thought as follows: tell me if I am right?

Week of the 19th, "Monsieur."

Week of the 26th }
 " " Jan. 2 } "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Week of Jan. 9th, "Parisian Romance."

What do *you* say? The reason I place "Monsieur" in the repertoire for that week is that the week is so bad it will make little difference *what* we do—as "Monsieur" is trivial—light—easy—it will be like a rest for me and it will be better than doing "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and jeopardizing the success by playing to bad houses on the first week.

Boston is equally serious—for, altho' I am rejoiced to think I shall meet Irving—as an opponent I don't care to face him, and he comes to Boston on my second week! I play two weeks at the Globe Theatre, weeks of Jan. 15 and 23—on the 23rd. Irving comes. What am I to do? Write me and advise me. Business is splendid.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

With his purpose to act in Shakespeare's "Richard III." I had, from the first, warmly sympathized, and it was pleasant now to hear that he was earnestly preparing himself for that important venture.

St. Nicholas Hotel, Cincinnati,
Nov. 29, 1887.

My Dear Winter:—

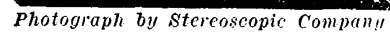
What a place this is!—or, rather, what a place this is *not!!* It is very horrible, after Washington. I dressed in a filthy, draughty hole last night. The light man had to hold the moon in his arms in the second act, and he *would* wobble it about and finally fell off the ladder and nearly set the house on fire with the moon. And I don't think the people like "Jekyll and Hyde." I heard somebody say, last night, that it is "a hell of a play"; and a "gentleman" called upon me and asked me to visit his house with him, as his daughter was anxious to see what I looked like, off the stage!

I read about Mr. Irving at the Lambs' Club in the N. Y. papers this morning. I am glad you were not there—at least I hope you were not, and you cannot have been, for I do not see your name. To be wedged in between ——— and—well, no matter—would not be pleasant. We will have a few choice and delicate evenings when I am in town—hein? I have so much to ask your advice upon. I am sorry, very sorry, and *it is very bad for me*, but I see no way out of it—I shall be compelled to play "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" December 26, the opening night of Booth and Barrett. It *can* be arranged no other way. I have tried to cancel a week but have failed.

That was a great big week—the last in Washington—and added another two thousand dollars to my hard earned savings.

I can obtain no definite reply from Mr. Palmer, about the Madison Square Theatre, but he still holds out hopes—if I

Y.
ist
ot
—
a
?
7
-
,
a
t
l



Hosted by Google

cannot succeed in having a house in New York what do you advise?—It seems I shall be compelled to play again all summer in the city and then make another tour. But with so much good work that can be well, even finely done, in New York, it seems idle and stupid to gad about the country.

I have been studying *Richard the Third*. It will be the great success of my life when I play it. But I see him quite, *quite* differently to what tradition and the modern actor tell us. As regards the scenery and effects I think too, when I come to chat it over with you, I shall surprise you, and I hope please you.

Yours always, dear Winter,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Louisville Hotel, Louisville, Ky.,

December 7, 1887.

My Dear Winter: —

A thousand thanks for another kind and thoughtful letter from you. I will do as you wish—altho' as regards plays I shall have my hands full. "Nero" comes first and then, I hope, "Beau Brummell," and I intend—this quite positively, for I have been hard at work on it—to do "Richard III.," next season. I will explain my views regarding it when I see you. I feel very certain that it will be one of the greatest successes of my life, and you know I do not feel *always* sanguine. Of course, this is quite in confidence to you—because I may be laughed at for my pains.

You know how glad I shall be if you will write "Beau Brummell" yourself—I think you *should* do it. Dramatic literature in this country requires such a filip. If things go right we will go to England together next summer and we will look up the places and the costumes, we will saturate ourselves with everything of those days.

I also need sketches—sketches of interiors and exteriors for

“Nero”—“Beau Brummell” and “Richard III.” I think with those three plays, done as I shall do them—I am not speaking now of my own poor individual effort—I should be able to hold the fort for one season! Anyhow, if the summer is free to me—you are *mine*, flesh and bone, and *I* am the DEVIL.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

In the course of this tour he acted in Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Toronto, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis. On December 19, 1887, he again appeared in New York, acting at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, where he remained till January 14, 1888. Another tour followed, but he was in New York, for one week, in February, and he returned in June. The repertory, all the while, remained unchanged,—“Monsieur,” “A Parisian Romance,” “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” and “Prince Karl,”—and by his earnest, judicious, persistent use of that repertory, he was able not only to maintain his prestige but to extend it.

IV.

1888 TO 1890.

MANSFIELD, at this time, had reached a most important stage of his professional career. His immediate attention was fixed upon the enlargement of his means of appeal,—it being his conviction that the public is ever craving something new, and that no actor can long prosper who does not gratify that solicitude,—but his “darker purpose” was to seek renown beyond the ocean, to act in London, and to return home a conqueror. With that intent he determined not only to acquire new parts, especially *Nero*,—upon which he had long brooded, and which, though never popular, became one of his most characteristic embodiments,—but to form a strong company and challenge all competitors.

Continental Hotel, Philadelphia,

March 14, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

You write to me sadly and it makes me sad. I wish I could do something to cheer you up. I think you need taking away from yourself for a while. Certainly the best thing you can do will be to go to England with me. You do nothing but

work and think and think and work, and you expect yet to be well and cheerful?! I wish I had you with me. Everybody about me at present is on the verge of lunacy and it is I who make them so. I think I am a sort of *Margrave* (in Lytton's "Strange Story"). Damn this pen! I can't write with it. However, I think my eccentricities have the effect of keeping people very much alive—even if *mad*!

I am studying *Nero* (also lively!) and I like it. I think I shall revel in him. I am going to make him a beautiful demon. Possessed of every lovely physical attribute and the mind and spirit loathsome only—"a rosy apple, rotten at the core," and even that evil spirit much the natural result of his time and education. A youth of thirty, with golden brown hair with red shadows in it—a form and face as *nearly* lovely as I can cause them to appear, a bounding step, an agile grace and a winsome, treacherous smile. That's my *Nero* and I think if I partly succeed in this appearance only—half the battle's won. The play is strong but deals only with the latter days and an episode in the life of the Cæsar. At the banquet I cause him to sing, and the harps to play, and roses will be showered and garlands twined. *Charis*, the slavegirl will dance before him, and, dancing, poisoned, die! But there—I bore you, and we'll read the play together. Again!! Well, will you pass the day with me on say Tuesday week, March 27? I will write no more now—but be sure to say Tuesday!

Always yours wholly,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

In the spring of 1888, being in somewhat frail health, it became necessary for me to make a voyage, and therefore, rather suddenly, I laid aside the pen and sailed for England. Mansfield had not been apprized of my intention to go away, although his friendly request that I should be his companion

in a visit to that country had been declined. Hence the following characteristic letter:

N. Y.,

April 23, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

It was very sad to come home and find that I had missed seeing you by just one day, and that had it not been for that I might, at least, have gone on board with you, and wished you "God speed"—altho' I don't know what particular good would have resulted from such a proceeding! However, there you are a-sailing and a-sailing the wide ocean, with a reef in your mizzen-top and several (let us hope SEVERAL) main-braces spliced—and here I am, pegging away at a head wind and a heavy cross sea, with a bad cold aboard and my scuppers all stopped up. As I consider this nautical language appropriate, I hope you will understand it.

Seriously I *miss* you, altho' I saw so little of you, but I had looked forward to this stay in town particularly because I *did* hope to see you—and very selfishly, because I had much to ask of you. I don't wonder you fled, and well may it become you! I am getting together a strong company, I think a very strong one, but it is the Devil's own work and fearful are the terms they all ask, being stars themselves, to support such a poor thing as myself. However, as it is a question of winning the battle, I am to lead veterans into the field and shall not trust to raw recruits—so you may look out for an array of talent.

More of this when it is all certain. I envy you over there.

Remember me affectionately to Mr. Irving and respectfully to Miss Terry, and believe me, dear Winter, always devotedly yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

This is written at two A.M., and I am not sure that there

is much sense in it—but, as it does no harm you *might* remember me kindly to EVERYBODY!

Boston, May 29, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

I thank you for your two good letters. I cannot tell you how much pleasure it gives me to hear from you. I wish I were with you—we should have a happy time. As it is I shall not be able to come over until, probably, the end of July. Let me know if you expect to be in England?

I have little time to write, for I am very busy—there has been no day without rehearsals—and I am playing here, in Boston, eight times a week. So far the engagement has been successful—*very*. I close here Saturday night, with what promises to be an overflowing house—I shall probably have to speak—but I shall confine myself modestly to “Thank you and Good-by!” I do not think I could say much of interest to them here.

Next Monday I open in New York, with “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”—we act four weeks at the Madison Square Theatre, and I shall do all our repertory, in order to have the people engaged for England in good working order. Whom to engage as leading lady I do not know! Miss Cameron has decided to go to Paris and elsewhere, for study and for her health. She goes with Mrs. Stow—you remember Jack?—his wife. I made an offer to Miss Effie Ellsler—but, albeit she is not beautiful, she also required \$400 a week—which I cannot afford to pay.

I purchased a box for the Wallack Benefit and presented it to John Gilbert and Mrs. Gilbert, Mme. Ponisi, etc. They were much pleased. Gilbert has since called upon me here, but I was not in at the time.

You ask me about —: I only know him slightly; *very* slightly. I enquired about him, however, of some musical friends of mine and they tell me he is a musician of some ability—quite a good fellow. A little fast and rather in bad odor with

the "Bong-tong" here—which ought to be something in his favor!

I have only met him at the Tavern Club here, of which he is a member, I believe. He plays the violin very sweetly. What I saw of him I rather liked. I remember his being present at the initial performance of "Prince Karl," and his saying, afterward, at the Tavern Club—"Et ees verra beautiful—verra beautiful—but *what* ees it all about?"; which was "verra" true! I think he is a Pole, but not a Jew.

You must let me know what your plans are. It is good of you to interest yourself on my behalf. 'Tis but a poor play, as you know, and I think you are apt to look with too lenient an eye upon my shortcomings. I *am* a DAMNED bad actor, and somehow I realize it more and more every day.

Pray let me hear from you. Give my heartiest and warmest greetings to Henry Irving. I do not write to him because I know how much he has on his mind without being bored by my nonsense.

Ever—always—yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It was characteristic of Henry Irving that he felt a lively interest in every phase of human activity and, particularly, that he was sympathetic with every courageous and novel adventure undertaken in his profession. No man could be more fervently desirous than Irving was that other actors, supposing them to be meritorious, should meet with the recognition and practical reward that merit deserves. He had known and had befriended Mansfield when that much younger actor was struggling through an

arduous novitiate in London, and he failed not to observe, with sympathy and satisfaction, his intrepid and striking enterprise, as shown in the choice and practical utilization of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Mansfield, in meditating a professional visit to London, with his new plays, believed that if he could successfully appear in that capital, preferably at the Lyceum, his success abroad would much accelerate his advancement at home. That belief he made known to me, and it was subsequent to my mention of the subject to Irving that a correspondence ensued between the two men, resulting in an arrangement for Mansfield's appearance at Irving's theatre, in the course of the season of 1888-'89. It had already been arranged that Irving, on his return from America, would make his re-entrance at the London Lyceum on April 14, and a contract had been made with the eminent French actress Sarah Bernhardt, providing for her advent at that house in the following July. The opening for Mansfield, who, on February 14, 1888, had leased the Lyceum for a period of several weeks, was assigned for September 4. The prospect seemed entirely auspicious, and both Irving and Mansfield viewed their plan with pleasurable expectation of a happy result. The way, however, was not to be smooth. Mansfield's prosperity with "Dr.

Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" had fired emulation, and as Stevenson's story of "The Strange Case" was not, in America, protected by copyright, several plays on the basis of it were speedily manufactured, in imitation of Mansfield's drama,—which, as already mentioned, was to a large extent his own work. One of those plays was produced in New York, on March 12, 1888, at Niblo's Garden, by Mr. Daniel E. Bandmann (1840-1905), an actor of considerable ability and long experience, and that performer afterward announced that he would proceed with it to London, intending to present it there, in advance of Mansfield's arrival. Opportunity in London, however, is not readily found. The only theatre that Mr. Bandmann seemed likely to have any chance of securing for his purpose was one called the Opera Comique. The situation, of course, soon became known to Irving, and necessary steps were immediately taken to command it. A cable message was sent to Mansfield, advising his presence in London in season for the making of all needful preparations to appear at the Lyceum early in August instead of early in September, as first proposed, and the Opera Comique was leased by Irving, for a considerable time. I remember the amused and amusing voice and manner of Irving, when, on one of Sarah Bernhardt's "Tosca" nights,

he came into the Lyceum box where I was sitting, and, showing me a slip of paper, remarked: "I have protected our friend. I have hired the Opera Comique, for some extra rehearsals. This is my receipt. If Mansfield comes over at once, we shall have no trouble." Mansfield did come over at once. From June 4 to June 30 he was acting in New York, at the Madison Square Theatre, but, after the close of that engagement, and on receipt of Irving's message, he sailed for England.

It happened that Irving was, at this time, rambling in Cumberland, with friends,—among them the writer of this memoir,—and Mansfield presently joined the party, at the cosey old hotel at Patterdale, on the shore of Ullswater; and I remember we sat up all night, discussing his budget of American news and his plans and prospects for a London season. The meeting was a delightful one. The relations between Mansfield and Irving were then friendly. They did not always remain so. They fluctuated, considerably; and although, at the last, the two men remained on ostensibly amicable terms of social intercourse, the feeling existent between them was that of disapprobation on the part of Irving and antipathy on the part of Mansfield. It is necessary to allude to this subject, because those actors, eventually, became professionally opposed,



HENRY IRVING IN 1888

and because circumstances in the stage career of Mansfield would otherwise remain unexplained. The subject, furthermore, is an essential part of theatrical history,—a record which should tell the truth, and not be encumbered with sentimental eulogium and obscuration of facts. Mansfield had no reason to blame any one but himself for the loss of Henry Irving's active friendship. It was an infirmity of his mind that he ascribed every mishap, every untoward circumstance, every reverse of fortune, to some external, malign influence,—never to any accident, or any error of his judgment, or any ill-considered act or word, or any fault of his own. Accordingly, when the total result of his London ventures had proved disastrous to him, as by and by it did, he accounted for it by adopting the fantastic, ridiculous notion that Irving, out of jealousy, had, from the first, intended to ruin him, and by great social influence and control of the press had accomplished that purpose. There has been a liberal superfluity of that kind of reproach against Henry Irving, in association with the names of several distinguished actors who have appeared in London and, according to some of their admirers, have been dissatisfied with the measure of commendation there accorded to them;—for example, Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Mary Anderson, Helena

Modjeska, Ada Rehan, and Charles Coghlan. The disseminators of that frivolous gossip, meanwhile, have never explained how Irving found time to attend to his own complex and exacting business, while attending so industriously to the destruction of professional rivals, or how it ever happened that, possessing such imperial control over the society and the press of London, he could not avoid occasional disastrous failures and, at times, a newspaper defamation of his own acting quite worthy of the pens of Kenrick and Pasquin. The fact is that Irving earnestly desired that Mansfield should meet with great success in London, believed that he would meet with it, and did all in his power to promote that result.

Two letters that Mansfield wrote to me, one shortly before and one immediately after the arrangement had been made for his appearance at the London Lyceum Theatre, display in a clear light the respect and affection with which he then regarded Irving.

The Croisic, New York,
January 9, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

What must you think of me? Here I have been a week and a half and not a line to you! Day after day it has been on my mind, but it is absolutely a fact that I have not had a moment to collect my thoughts to say a word to you.

"A GREAT, GOOD MAN"

93

I am in the midst of the most important work and projects, and it is necessary, dear friend, that I should see you.

When can you come to me? I know how busy you are, but you know also how my work ties me down.

You will be startled, I know, when I tell you what my project is, and you will, probably, tell me that I am a fool—and, frankly, I believe I am.

It is *good* of you to give yourself this trouble for me! Yes, *Henry Irving is a great, good man, and I am entirely devoted to him.* He was charming to me. I received a little book from him, the other day, which I value highly.

Now, *when* will you come to me?—can't you make it Saturday evening next? For next week, as I play in Harlem, I get home late.

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The Croisic, New York,

February 17, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

I expected you to breakfast yesterday and was very, very much disappointed you did not come. I am off to-morrow, for many weeks, and do not return here until Holy Week. At least I hope to see you then.

This is a great thing Irving has done for me—pray God he sees the good work he intends for me accomplished! But I am a bad actor, and I feel it more and more every day.

I received three books of yours, from Boston, to-day. A thousand thanks.

When I return I am to see something of you, am I not? In the meanwhile, God bless you and keep you. *If you see Irving, tell him how I feel about this—it is the greatest good thing a great man ever did for a youngster.*

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

After our festal night at Patterdale Mansfield immediately proceeded to London, to begin rehearsals of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." At first he lodged at 118 Jermyn Street, "over a hen-shop," as by an early post he facetiously informed me: later he moved to 183 Piccadilly. "I think we are in a good way," he wrote, "to crush the tragedian Bandmann. At all events I have the sole rights to the play,—from the publishers, Longmans, Green & Company, to whom Stevenson sold his rights. They protect me and I indemnify them. The same lawyers who succeeded in the 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' case are engaged and very busy. Bandmann is to be met, and served with papers, upon his arrival."

Long afterward Mansfield described to me the call on those publishers that he made, in company with Irving, to adjust the copyright business. Irving, who sometimes spoke indistinctly, mentioned his name to an elderly clerk who was in attendance and who neither understood nor recognized him, so that he was obliged to repeat the name several times. When that dense person had left the room, to announce the visitors, Irving walked to and fro, for a few moments, musing; then, turning to his companion, he said, reflectively: "Mansfield, I believe there are some persons who are igno-

rant of the history of their own times." Irving, it should be noted, was a figure so universally known in London that, as a rule, when he happened to call a cab and wished to go to his residence, all he said, or needed to say, was "Home."

Mansfield's production of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was effected at the Lyceum Theatre on August 4, 1888. On the morning of that day he addressed to me the following letter, which indicates the vexations to which he had been exposed and the obstacles that he supposed to exist. His notion that rapid changes of scenery could not be made at the Lyceum Theatre, and were not customarily made there, was incorrect. It is possible, however, that the mechanics, scene-shifters, etc., did not care to make them for *him*. Ungenial "Sons of Martha" do sometimes behave in a peculiar manner when working for strangers, or for persons whom they do not like.

183 Piccadilly, London,

August 4, 1888.

My Dear Willie:—

Just a line before undergoing execution! I am sorry to say I am hoarse, very hoarse; how could I be otherwise, with what I have undergone and the weather we have had?

It would have been quite enough work for any one man to parry the attacks of Herr Bandmann. He has kept my hands completely full for the last week. *Last night* he announced a full dress rehearsal at the Olympic, and issued over 1,500

invitations,—all without the consent of the management! Of course they stopped it, and he then had the audacity to send to me for permission to give it at the Opera Comique! Of course we were compelled to decline! All the same, he issued slips of paper to the crowd which had assembled before the Olympic, inviting them to the Opera Comique, and he would have *forced his way in, had I not placed commissionaires and police around the building.* Lively, is it not?

I am sorry to say, like all great things and most great men, the Lyceum is not faultless. I have had, and am having, a hard time. They are, of course, accustomed to slow work—to taking months to prepare a play. They do not understand my rapid methods and swift action. There is no discipline, and crowds of loafers about the stage, who trip over one another and do nothing. The men are slow to obey and argumentative, and full of importance and the conviction that they know it all, or, at least, much better than we do. The company complain of the darkness of the dressing-rooms and inadequate conveniences, compared with our American theatres. Scenery which has arrived in St. Louis or Grand Rapids at four in the afternoon, and been used, without a hitch, at eight in the evening, and without a dress rehearsal, required all Thursday night, all day Friday, and a scenic rehearsal which lasted from eight yesterday evening until two this morning! and was the most imperfect, at that, it has been my bad fortune to attend.

I am much distressed, very weary, very hoarse, and very anxious, and I have had too much work and too little play for a small boy.

God bless you—I shall see you to-night. Pray God, all may yet go well!

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The legal measures that were taken to protect Mansfield's rights to the use of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" proved decisively successful, and Mr.

Bandmann's attempt to forestall him was foiled,—much to the satisfaction of all fair-minded persons. Mr. Bandmann had falsely proclaimed himself, in America, the original representative of *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde*,—the fact being that Mansfield had acted the dual part ten months before it was assumed by any other person. It should also be observed that the plan,—likewise stolen from him,—of weaving a love-story into the analysis of *Jekyll's* complex nature, as set forth by Stevenson, was original with Mansfield, and that it was he who led the way, and showed other actors how the abstruse theme could be made practically dramatic. Four days before Mansfield appeared, Irving, who was leaving home, for a tour in Switzerland, and who had seen a rehearsal of the play, signified his auspicious view of our friend's advent at the Lyceum by this message to me: "Mansfield will be splendid." That augury was fulfilled. I remember the occasion as one of exceptional interest. The audience was numerous and of a brilliantly intellectual character. Upon his first entrance Mansfield was welcomed with two distinct, hearty rounds of applause, and he was recalled to the stage five times in the course of the representation. His voice was a little hoarse and once or twice his movement was slow and artificial, because of extreme nervous excitement, but

he acted with intrepid spirit and, generally, with amazing vigor. The crowning artistic charm of his impersonation was its preservation of unity. The two sides of the one nature were clearly shown,—the concrete result being one man, not two. The element of terror was made duly prominent, but the element of pathos was made to exceed that of terror. *Jekyll* was invested with poetic sentiment: *Hyde* was embodied as loathsome and venomous, but very awful. *Hyde's* perception of the invisible ghost of his murdered victim was made to provide a moment of truly infernal exultation, and it gave the assemblage a thrill of horror. In the scene of the transformation of *Hyde* to *Jekyll* Mansfield's splendid outburst of passion, combined with his startling demeanor and ever-increasing volume of vocal power, caused a prodigious effect. Often as he afterward played that exacting dual part, I do not think he ever played it in a more inspired mood than he did on that critical and important night. He did not win the public heart: hearts are not won by horrors: but he made it clear that he was a unique actor and one entirely worthy of high intellectual consideration.

On the next morning I sent to him this message,—interesting, perhaps, as conveying first impressions of a memorable occasion.

CONGRATULATION

99

Hammersmith,
August 5, 1888.

Dear Dick:—

I am off for Scotland. I expect to be absent for about ten days. I congratulate you on your success. The piece was thought dreary and tiresome, but *you* were greatly admired, and I think the public will grow to be very fond of you. Don't feel hurt at the criticisms, if any of them are sharp. The Second Act should be carried more rapidly. Miss Sheridan should be told to let herself out a bit. The hag needs more effect. There is a little too much of *Jekyll's* misery—and misery never was popular, on the stage,—or off! I wish you would get a new wig. Fox could make a much better one than that you now wear. And you ought to make *Jekyll* a more picturesque fellow,—more “taking,”—even at a sacrifice of strict correctness. He is heavy now, at least he was, last night, in act second. Your first entrance should be made striking, and there the *appearance* becomes of vital importance. I was delighted with your first act and with the scene of the change. Your Speech was in excellent taste. Miss Cameron played better than ever before, because so moderate and symmetrical. But tell her to be distinct and vigorous. She needs great care of her health,—exercise and good sleep, so that she may not be weak and seem fragile. I was surprised by the good judgment and the grace of her acting. Sullivan also was tasteful and judicious.

Ever yours,

W. W.

After one of those *Jekyll* and *Hyde* nights he wrote to me:

Frith, the painter, who remembered my having been to him once, for his opinion upon some sketches of mine, came to see me last night—came to my dressing-room, after the play,—deeply moved and impressed, and said I reminded him of

Macready! And he thought my voice was finer. He's a bluff old fellow, and I think he meant it. I am foolish enough to be quite happy over it!

Always, dear friend, yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

On his return from Switzerland Irving attended a performance of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and after it had ended he and Mansfield met, for supper, at the Garrick Club, where one of those trivial incidents occurred which sometimes are more conducive than acts of positive hostility could be, to the disturbance of friendly relations between individuals. Attendance at the Lyceum, large at first, had begun to dwindle, and Mansfield, dissatisfied and somewhat depressed in mind, and no doubt weakened by the prodigious exertions that he had been making, spoke much of his discontent and of the tremendous strain imposed upon him by the acting of such painfully difficult parts and of the warnings given to him by physicians. Irving, at most times prone to more or less playful satire, listened observantly, and then, in his bland, piquant way, replied: "Ah—yes—interesting—very: but, Mansfield, my boy, if—*if it isn't wholesome, I wouldn't do it.*" No unkindness could have been intended, but a sensitive man, especially one in whose temperament there is much of the woman, will

sometimes remember with resentment the satirical pleasantry of a friend, long after he has forgotten a substantial kindness. It was about this time that I received from Irving (Monday, August 27, 1888), a letter in which he said:

"Poor Mansfield! He's a little hipped just now, and thinks the world's against him. But I did my best to 'shake him up' and to show that he's everything to be grateful for. He's made a thorough success with the public—not every man's good fortune. I'm very fond of him and hope his boat may ever sail as freely as it does now."

The boat, however, was not sailing as freely as it might have done and as the actor's friends assuredly wished that it might do. The trend of his fortunes and the direction of his thoughts, at this time, are well evinced in the following letter, received in Paris:

August 30, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

I have your good kind letter: you are, thank God! always the same. Some of my idols here, however, have fallen. It resolves itself into a hard struggle,—and a struggle it shall be. I have youth and strength on my side. Our friends are rather inclined to advise me to finish up quickly and go home. I shall *not* finish up quickly, and I shall *not* go home—just yet—altho' I know that very powerful forces will be, probably, arrayed against me. Business is slightly improving and will doubtless grow better as we reach the middle of September and October.

I want some charming first piece, and I am looking for it;

nothing in which to appear myself, but for five or six ladies and one or two men; it is difficult to find. I should then begin, as the nights grow longer, at 7:30, and with Dr. J. & H. at 8:30. I think the play will draw a good business, in spite of all. I shall have the "Parisian Romance" knocked into shape and do it (I think at the Globe), and follow it with "Nero" and "Richard III." Voila!

Please say not a word to any one: what I say to you I say to myself. Would you could be with me and by my side always! I shall get all the money I can, and make myself as strong as possible in that particular. I have seen Irving but that one day, and heard nothing of him since.

I hope Daly is doing finely in Paris. Will you remember me most kindly to Miss Rehan? When do you return?

Always, dear Winter,

RICHARD.

Mansfield's season at the Lyceum extended from August 4 to December 1, and, financially, it was a failure. On October 1 he presented "A Parisian Romance," and gave his fine performance of *Baron Chevril*. October 10 he made the mistake of presenting "Prince Karl" for a Benefit (for the poor of the East End), so that when it was brought forward, on October 13, as his regular attraction, it lacked the gloss of novelty and did not attract much notice. He had been wisely advised relative to the Benefit expedient, but the good counsel,—contained in the following letter,—of one of the most experienced and judicious of London managers had been disregarded;

Theatre Royal, Manchester,
October 9, 1888.

My Dear Mr. Mansfield:—

Mr. Irving asks me to say for him that he would be delighted to aid in any way he can. He thinks, however, that to make him a *patron* of a performance in the *Lyceum* would do harm instead of good, as it would look like a “put up” thing. He quite thinks, as I thought myself, that you would do very much better *not* to have a benefit for a charity on your first night, as such is so often done in London that it has come to be taken by the critics and the public as a bid for favor. You make your play more important by giving it on its merits, and *friends*, in London, in such matters, do not count for a row of pins. Very much better have the good results of a fortnight yourself, and, as the Yellow Fever benefit seems to be off, from your having another subject, you need not have a Charity Benefit at all. We all certainly think that you would do better *not* to have a benefit.

Yours very truly,

BRAM STOKER.

Upon the fluctuations of business while Mansfield remained at the Lyceum, and upon the critical discussion that ensued as to his impersonations of *Chevrial* and *Prince Karl*, it would be unprofitable to linger. Toward the last he wrote:

Dear Old Fellow:—

I think it very unkind of you not to let me know that you were back in town. Overwhelmed with work, I lost the pencilled lines you sent me, with your address, and was waiting to hear of your return. I have much to say to you,—and above all to thank you. A true, staunch friend ever.

Things are looking very much better than at first. Let me know the moment you get back from Bath, or I shall never forgive you. During the day I love to spend some quiet hours on the river, and want you with me! Was with Toole until late last night. You will see him in Bath.

Yours as ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

After his season at the Lyceum had ended Mansfield acted for one week in Liverpool, by way of reinforcing his purse, and before returning to London he visited Derby and gave two performances there, for the benefit of the school which he had attended when he was a boy, and which he always remembered with affectionate interest. "I had one bright day in Derby,"—so he wrote to me,—“where, at the old school, I met with a welcome worthy of a King—a packed house and endless cheers and calls. After the play the boys took the horses out of the carriage and dragged me,—they yelling like Comanches,—to the school. I played twice, and netted a handsome sum, for a new racquet court and a new chapel.” To that visit his thoughts often reverted, and more than once he told me it was the one unalloyed happiness of the year he then passed in England. The Lyceum season, while it had increased his prestige as an actor, had left him in debt, to Irving, for rent of the theatre and other expenses, £2675. With that situation he had now

to contend. He did not lose heart, however, but determined on another and still more onerous venture,—the resumption of the plan he had formed before leaving New York, of acting in London in one of the great plays of Shakespeare. With this purpose he hired the Globe Theatre and began preparations for a magnificent production of “Richard III.”

In the meanwhile, after a visit to various places in Scotland and Ireland, during which time I lost sight of him, I had returned to New York, and the first authentic news from him came in this letter:

Long’s Hotel, New Bond Street, London,
December 16, 1888.

My Dear Winter:—

A merry Christmas, dear old man, and a happy New Year! If I have not written before, you know how wild with work and how driven to death and worried I have been. Had I good news of myself I should have written often, but to drone out the same old story, of bad houses and poor business, is as bad as playing to them, and Heaven knows that is bad enough.

I received a charming book of poems from Scotland,—poems of yours; and, when I have a moment, I sit down at the piano and try to sing them, to extemporized music.

Irving is in town, but he cometh not to me.

We open the Globe on Saturday.

Well, all blessings be upon you for the New Year; sometimes write to me, and don’t forget altogether

Your true and grateful friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

He opened the Globe Theatre on December 22, 1888, with "Prince Karl," but he had not been acting long in that play before his voice, always very sensitive to the London climate, became practically disabled, and he was obliged to rest. An arrangement thereupon was made, with the accomplished English comedian Lionel Brough, to fill the time with that fine old comedy "She Stoops to Conquer," and Mansfield went to Bournemouth, where he devoted himself assiduously to the study of "Richard III.," so that he might present that tragedy at the Globe as soon as he should be able to act. His generous friend Eben D. Jordan had come to his assistance in that formidable undertaking, and all requisite preparations were now rapidly made for the worthy fulfilment of his momentous design. Among the allies whom, fortunately, at that time, he was able to interest in his enterprise were the learned and exact Shakespeare scholar, Walter Heries Pollock, and the accomplished antiquarian, J. G. Waller. Mansfield himself had made a stage version of the play, reverting to the original text, though making use of some of Cibber's cogs and words. Seymour Lucas was employed to design dresses and armor for the production, Edward German to compose incidental music, and William Telbin and others to paint scenery. The tragedy

22,
act-
very
cally
unge-
ished
time
per,"
e he
chard
at the
His
to his
nd all
e for
esign.
time,
e the
Her-
n, J.
stage
text,
and
esign
ward
Ham
gedy



Photograph by Notman Company, Boston

EBEN D. JORDAN

was presented at the Globe on March 16, 1889, and Mansfield's embodiment of *Glo'ster*, then given for the first time on any stage, became, and for some time remained, one of the principal themes of discussion in the society and press of London. His own account of the venture follows:

Langham Hotel, Portland Palace,
London, W., March 24, 1889.

My Dear Winter:—

At last and successfully!! Considering how much we have undertaken and what an enormous task it is to present Shakespeare here, I think we have every reason to more than congratulate ourselves. I am sorry your version did not come sooner, but as it is, it has been of great service to me.

The fools here do not know Cibber from Shakespeare—I have almost entirely done without Cibber and restored Shakespeare's lines—but because I have to a large extent followed the "*scenario*" of Cibber, they are under the impression that the lines must be Cibber—which they are not. However, thank God we have succeeded—and that is the main point. On the opening night—we commenced with an uproar in the pit; everybody against us or doubtful; the close was a *triumph*—an ovation! Last night the house was *packed* and very many people were turned away. So it has come at last. I have waited a long time.

I cannot tell you how I long to be at home again—England does not agree with me; I am ill and wretched; my throat has not been well for months—and the strain and anxiety is something too fearful. What would I not give to be in my rooms at the Croisic—you and I, over a glass of grog and a cigar (a *big one*—I have not smoked for a month), and you "*in the mood*"!

There are more hypocrites, liars, parasites, and sycophants

here to the square mile than in America to the square State. I know we have some of it in America—but here it is a recognized, established, and *admired* business, and the man or woman who does not practice it is considered a fool and liberally cold-shouldered.

August!—will see me home again, please God, and it will take much to drag me thence. I am very, very busy, so I cannot write much now.

God bless you, old fellow,

Ever yours,

DICK.

Among the many personal tributes that Mansfield received, on the occasion of his performance of *Richard the Third*, two letters from the poet Robert Buchanan gave him much gratification. The author of such poems as "Two Sons," "The Ballad of Judas Iscariot," and "The Vision of the Man Accurst" was a person whose praise was worth having. He is dead now, and in his death a fine genius perished. Buchanan's first letter, a copy of which was sent to me by Mansfield, was first published in "The New York Tribune," April 9, 1889.

London, March 26, 1889.

My Dear Sir:—

Outside praise is of little value to one who works from his own point of insight, but, knowing from experience that a friendly wish may be pleasure, I venture to tell you how much I was impressed by your *Richard the Third*.

Your Shakespearean work seems to me about as fine as it could well be. I do not understand those critics who, while

praising it, say that it is not *Richard*. To me it seems an absolute realization of that demoniac creature.

You have one unusual gift, in addition to your subtler ones,—that of music in the voice, which makes a poor devil of a poet hunger to have his lines delivered by such an organ.

I went, prepared to see an excellent piece of acting: I found a masterpiece of characterization. And what a delight it is at last to find an actor who is thoroughly alive, who is perfectly fearless in his intellectual agility, and never falters one moment in his execution of a daring conception.

I just write these few words of congratulation. Later I may have an opportunity of writing to the public also.

Yours truly,

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

To Richard Mansfield, Esq.

“Leyland,” Arkwright Road,

Hampstead, N.W., March 27, 1889.

Dear Mr. Mansfield:—

This road is at the top of St. John’s Avenue, and about ten minutes from the Swiss Cottage. My man can look after your fiery steed when you call, but, as I am somewhat uncertain in my movements, you might let me have a line, or a wire, to announce your advent. I wouldn’t like to miss the pleasure of seeing you. Would Friday or Saturday next suit you? If so, I’ll await your message.

Pray believe me when I say that I seldom go out of my way to write letters of compliment, and that my message to you was a most unusual one, for *me*. I at the same time sent a line of congratulation to the sweet child who played the *Prince*. I mention this as there are some idiots who are always writing letters, and you might fancy me a “gusher.” Indeed, when I think of it, I can hardly remember *ever* having done such a thing before,—from which you may gather at least one thing, that I was strongly and deeply moved.

There are mean souls who bend down only to the sun in its meridian. *I turn to the splendor of the dawn!* If you possess pathos in any proportion to your power, I believe you will move mountains. I saw strange possibilities of pathos in several of your scenes, notably that with *Lady Anne*, when your face became wonderfully tender and spiritual—but your greatest conjuration will come out of your vitality: it is indeed a pleasure to find an actor so splendidly *alive*.

With all good wishes,

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

Richard Mansfield, Esq.

Mansfield's production of "Richard III." was, by various classes and persons, in London, received with much favor. There were, of course, dissenting voices: nothing is ever satisfactory to everybody: but the public opinion, in general, was that of approbation. The attendance at the theatre, however, presently began to lessen, and the actor himself began to droop, in weariness and discontent. Social attentions were bestowed upon him in abundance: they always are, in such cases—that is, when an actor has, for any reason, become a sensation of the hour; but often they were insincere and insignificant, and to him, certainly, they afforded little if any pleasure and no compensation for the lack of sufficient public support. He continued to present "Richard III." until the first of June, when his lease of the Globe Theatre expired and his Lon-

don season was ended. His thoughts and feelings all this while, can be divined from the following letter, one of several to the same effect, that he sent to me, in the course of that engagement:

Langham Hotel, Portland Place,
London, W., May 18, 1889.

My Dear Willie:—

I had your letter—always kind and thoughtful, and I wish all the world were like you. Read the extracts and your essay with great interest and will reserve my opinion until we meet, when we will have a discussion from 12 to 6 A.M.—altho', of course, you're quite right.—The discussion will be in the shape of sparkling wine and fragrant Havanas. I have much to tell you, but it had better not be written. You are not coming over this summer? I shall be glad, very glad when the season is over—and I may quit these beautiful but inhospitable shores and this apathetic people. The amount of courtesy I have received from my brother actors, etc., here would not fill a pea-nut shell! The lying—backbiting—intriguing—slandering, underhand dealing and robbery would, on the other hand, require a very large store house. No,—the people are not pleasant.

Yours ever,

RICHARD.

In July, 1889, he arrived in America, crowned with the laurel of distinction, heavily laden with debt, somewhat impaired in health, much distressed in mind, but resolute to attempt new ventures, to pay his debts, to set his affairs in order, and, by redoubled exertions, to win the leadership of the American stage. From that time onward, during a period of

eighteen years, till the close of his career, his activity was great, his labor was incessant, and he continuously occupied a conspicuous position, not only in the public gaze but in the critical mind,—for in the realm of the Theatre he seemed to be everywhere present and always doing something new. His first presentment in America of his version of “Richard III.” and his fresh view of *Glo’ster* was made at the Boston Globe, on October 21, 1889, and it was the cause of much discussion. Immediately after the performance, that night, many of his acquaintances assembled, by his invitation, in a parlor of the Parker House, for supper, and I remember that the decorum of the occasion took at first the impressive form of frosty silence, which at length was broken by a cheery voice, saying, “Mansfield, where did you get that *dreadful music*?” Long afterward he playfully referred to that incident, as typical of a kind of critical candor that might well have been spared,—particularly as the music, far from being “dreadful,” was exceptionally fine. Congratulation, however, was not withheld from him, either then or later. His peculiar theory as to the character of *Glo’ster*, a theory based more on historical studies than on Shakespeare’s play, was not generally accepted,—being, in fact, viewed, for the most part, with indifference, notwithstanding that he

made it ingeniously effective by novel treatment,—but the sustained power of his performance and certain special beauties of it were recognized and warmly commended, by many pens in many cities: for on the first night of Mansfield's *Richard the Third*, in Boston, many of the leading newspapers of the country were represented in the audience, and there was an eager disposition to sustain him in his earnest and valiant endeavor. Four days later he wrote to me, recording his prosperity:

Boston, October 25, 1889.

My Dear Old Fellow:—

Your article was indeed *SUPERB*, and I do not know, and cannot imagine, when you found time to write so thoroughly, so finely. Praise from you is praise indeed, and as fine and lasting as a *monument*.

I wish—I *wish* I could play up to it. I have quite realized what you say about lack of incisiveness and I find the difference apparent to myself in my acting since the first night. A twelve hours' rehearsal and the anxieties of a first night are not inducive to fine and precise expression, nor can *Richard* be played upon Apollinaris. I think a little Hungarian wine with seltzer helps me.

The houses have been very fine: \$1,200, \$1,100, \$1,400, \$1,500 (I am leaving out the odd dollars). I think this is good business, and it bids fair to be better still. Please God it may.

I will and have borne in mind all you say about Irving—I will have none but the kindest feelings: the business part of it shall be at once attended to.

And now, thank you, thank you, thank you, for the good—the great, *great* good you have done me!!

Yours quite,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It was remarked by the representative sage of English criticism that fame is like the shuttlecock, which must be struck at both ends in order that it may be kept up, and, fortunately for Mansfield, there were adverse as well as propitious reviews of his performance; and, although he did not like them, they contributed to his advancement.

Boston, October 27, 1889.

Dear Old Fellow:—

The Boston critics are tearing the flesh from off my bones—but we played to \$10,000 all the same! \$3,000 yesterday in the two performances.

God bless you, old fellow—I shall never, never be able to repay what you have done for me.

Ever, ever,

Yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

A little later the business had begun to decline and he became desirous of a change of bill. Toward the end of his Boston engagement he made his first experiment with the Ibsen Drama, having been persuaded to that fad by Miss Beatrice Cameron, then the leading actress in his company, as she long continued to be. On October 30 an afternoon per-



RICHARD MANSFIELD IN 1889

"Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch"

HENRY VI., 2, Act III., Sc. 3.

(Quotation selected by himself)

formance was given of "A Doll's House," Miss Cameron appearing as *Nora*, and acting that part exceedingly well.

Parker House, Boston,
November 1, 1889.

My Dear Winter:—

Thank you for another kind letter. I am much troubled to find another play. I am very tired of being the ruffian always and feel that it is absolutely necessary to my health and the well-being of my mind that I should play once a week, at least, some genial character. I can find nothing—nothing; and it must be something that will cost nothing in production. Can you not think of something for me?

I shall be in New York on Monday morning—indeed I shall arrive late on Sunday, leaving here at 3. If you are in town on Monday morning come in to the Croisic—but do not drag yourself there for me.

I realize all you say to me, and I will endeavor to follow your advice.

The weather is very trying and the strain great. Business is good. Miss Cameron has made a marvellous success—as great as it was unexpected; she was as near GREAT as I ever saw an actress—it was a revelation and an amazement to me and to the audience. I need not tell you what this sudden development means to us—for a charming and *brilliant* actress, such as she proved herself to be, is what we have sought and we can now really push her forward without the slightest fear. I speak absolutely sincerely and without favor regarding Miss Cameron. Even old Clapp gushed.

I am, always, always yours gratefully, truly,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

His engagement at the Boston Globe was closed on November 1, and the ensuing five weeks were

devoted to performances in Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore. I had advised him against needlessly antagonizing rivals in the professional race, and was wishful, in particular, to promote friendly relations between him and Jefferson, Lawrence Barrett, Augustin Daly, and other such leaders, and especially desirous that he should not,—as eventually, he did,—by rancorous talk, affront and alienate Henry Irving. I knew that harmony among those chieftains, all of whom were accustomed to open their minds very freely to me, relative to each other, would be in every way beneficial. From Philadelphia he wrote:

Continental Hotel, Philadelphia,

November 7, 1889.

My Dear Old Fellow:—

I do not know either Mr. Barrett or Mr. Daly—I have never met either—and of course I should be delighted to be friendly with them, but I do not think they care a damn about me. I have met ——— once, and he was very drunk and very friendly; I afterward called upon him when he was sober—but he refused to see me; I think he is a very intelligent person. I have tried for many years to make a friend (and a sincere one) of P—— but he has not got it in his nature to be a friend to any man—and he has always played me some trick for my pains—he is a very sly and untrustworthy person. I treat him always with courtesy—but I *cannot* trust him. To Irving I always,—my thoughts always,—turn with affection, and no matter what he might do, I do not think my affection for him would change. I cannot explain

this—unless it is what there is of the woman in my nature. As for *you*—as long as I have a roof over my head it is for you also, and, if you hadn't a son I should ask you to adopt a fine healthy child with a good appetite and plenty of animal spirits!

The Philadelphians are very indifferent and don't care a damn about this fine presentation of Shakespeare's tragedy.

I note what you say about wearing heavy cloaks—I quite understand.

Where can I get a copy of "The Man of the World"?

Always all yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Philadelphia, Pa.,

November 18, 1889.

My Dear Winter:—

Thank you for your last kind letter. Things here are not what they should be—nor do I ever expect them to be, in Philadelphia. There is not and never will be, to my thinking, any interest in Art here—and I am quite sure I should have done better with "The Rag Baby" or "The Tin Soldier." I shall be glad—glad—when I am out of the place. We are playing to about \$1,000 a night less than in Boston. I begin to think I can bear the Boston critics but not the Philadelphia houses!

I am greatly obliged to you for introducing "The ————" to my notice. Altho' in many ways I think badly written and capable of very much improvement, it is finely conceived and appeals strongly to me. I shall do it, and that very shortly. I am extending—and that *at once*—my repertory. Your old idea of "Beau Brummell" is being worked out now by *me*, with the assistance of a young man named "Fitch." I should be very grateful to you, old fellow, if you will write a preface for me to "The ————," short and pithy; something that I can publish in the programmes:

who and what and how, and everything about him: he was contemporary of ———, was he not? Or am I an ignorant brute? Will you do this for me? Do you think "The ——— — ———" for a first and "Sir Charles Coldstream" for a second piece would be a good bill? I should *not* use the title "Used Up," and I should alter somewhat the play itself. *Sir Charles* is a capital character; the question is—would it be risqué for *me* to do it now? should I be going back? Would it be bad policy? Then too as I am to do *Brummell* would the characters strike you as in any way alike? What do you think of *Young Wilding*, in "The Liar." Would *that* not be better? You know I look to you for advice always—and I am sure you will give it.

Our business in N. Y. *must* be great and, please God, it may be. Would you advise much advance advertising? Washington and Baltimore prospects look good,—and it seems that I am to be fêted in Washington: how different from this place—where I am treated with studied indifference, I may say rudeness.

You seemed from your last letter to have dropped back somewhat into melancholy—this *must* not be: you were so well and cheerful. In three weeks I shall be with you, and we will have high times! I have found some old play-books here for you.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Rennert's Hotel, Baltimore,

December 5, 1889.

My Dear Winter:—

What is the matter? I hope you are not offended with me about "Beau Brummell"? I won't do it at all if you say so—and I certainly shall not do it without your approval.

We are compelled to open on the 16th, with "Richard"—a postponement to the 25th would cost me \$4,000, which I can-

not afford. I have also thought well to raise my prices (in the orchestra seats) to \$2.00. Wallack's—or rather, Palmer's—holds but \$1,200 when quite full, so it would not pay me, with my enormous expenses. My success or failure in New York will mean *everything* to my future and the direction my work will take: if America wants a new actor—new enterprise—new work, and a man who will spend freely all that is given to him, they may encourage me. If they don't—I shall give them comedy and keep my money to myself.

I shall be in New York on Sunday—and I am looking forward so much to seeing you again—what say you to Monday evening? At the Croisic?—seven o'clock?

Always, always, yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

On December 16, 1889, he appeared in New York, at Palmer's Theatre, presenting "Richard III." Palmer's Theatre had been Wallack's and now, 1910, it is Wallack's again. His engagement there lasted till February 15. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was revived on January 20, 1890, "Prince Karl" on January 27, and on February 5 he acted *Humphrey Logan*, in a melodrama called "Master and Man." His production of "Richard III.", manifestly, was the most important of those proceedings. In its fidelity to historic fact and in its opulence of accessories and magnificence of picture that production surpassed all previous presentments of that tragedy on the New York stage. The garniture with which the play was invested,—the paintings and the dresses,

—reflected, not literally but in a vein of delicate exaggeration, suitable to a work of art, the aspect and condition of social affairs in England, in the time of “the unpopular king.” As a spectacle the presentment was a triumph of archæology. Mansfield, though, was not content with showing only a sumptuous historic pageant: he acted *Gloster* in a vein of interesting originality. His theory as to the development of the character, whether sound or unsound, was thoughtful and it stimulated thought. His method lacked, especially at first, the tumultuous, propulsive expedition which is requisite for the supremely effective acting of *Richard*, but it was not that of a stage parrot. He showed himself to be an actor of intellectual contrivance and startling force, and he impressed veteran observers with a deep sense of formidable personality and admirable art. Among others, that great woman and great actress Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, who knew all the stage traditions of the part and remembered all the notable assumptions of *Richard*, from the time of Forrest, Brooke, and Davenport to that of Edwin Booth and Henry Irving, was emphatic in her approval of his performance, an approval of exceptional value and significance. He did not, however, please everybody. That well-known remonstrant who intends to ejaculate “Louder!” when he hears

the trumpet blast of the angel Gabriel is always present in a theatrical audience, and he constantly writes to, or for, the newspapers. But such an actor as Mansfield could not be suppressed by the niggardly intolerance of implacable detraction. After the strangeness had ceased to be strange, and after the prattle had died away, his acting was judged by itself, and not by the standard of conventionality, and it justified itself by its intrinsic worth.

Letters that Mansfield addressed to me, from time to time, in the course of this engagement at Palmer's Theatre, are interesting, since they show the activity of his mind and the fluctuations of his fortunes and moods, record incidents that concern his welfare, and give piquant denotements of his character. He had been pleased with remarks of mine on his production of "Richard III." He had resolved on having a play on the subject of "Don Juan," and he proposed that we should coöperate in writing it: "When we produce it," he added, "we will say 'Don Juan, a Comedy, by Deux Autres,' which will be capital." He had considered plays based on Scott's novel of "Woodstock" and on "Peter Schlemihl." And he had again presented "A Doll's House" (once only, December 20), Miss Cameron giving her ingenuous performance of the child-wife, without

arousing public interest. The necessity of turning from Shakespeare to the old repertory had been urged upon his attention, and because of monetary stringency, he deemed it expedient to associate himself with Mr. T. Henry French, in bringing forward a current London "sensation" play. "I am going to tack a little, and do a melodrama," he wrote, referring to "Master and Man," "but I will get into port just the same. It is a little disheartening, sometimes, that's all." His book of songs, afterward published under the name of "One Evening," likewise now occupied some part of his attention.

The Croisic, New York,
December 17, 1889.

My dear, dear Winter:—

How nobly—how generously—how greatly you have written! I do not think words can ever repay you and I am afraid I can in no way ever—unless it be to deserve your commendation. How well and beautifully all is said that you have to say! I thank you, I thank you, with all my heart. God knows whether the people will come to see us—but if they *do not*—at least your writing will be the fine monument that will stand where I fell.—I am worn out to-day.

Ever your true, devoted, and obliged friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The Croisic, New York,
December 29, 1889.

My Dear Old Fellow:—

It seems such a hollow mockery,—when we had no Yule log, no Christmas tree, no children around us, no dance, nor no



Photograph by Stereoscopic Company, London

"RICHARD III."

Mansfield as Glo'ster; Beatrice Cameron as Lady Anne (Act I.)

snap-dragon, no halls full of merry people,—to wish anybody a jolly Christmas, that I refrained. I didn't have one myself and I didn't see why anybody else should and I smarted whenever one of the stage-hands, with a significant hand in his pocket and an expectant look said: "Merry Christmas." But don't think that I had forgotten you—only when one plays *Richard the Third* 500 times in one week, one hasn't any time even for one's truest friends!

Damn Ibsen! Who cares for Ibsen? Only I would wish, for that dear sweet girl's sake, her heart being so warped to that buoy, that it had not been entirely dragged away from her. I know—I feel, how she looked forward to a success here; I think her whole life was in it; too much so and it militated somewhat against her doing herself complete justice. She has been very ill ever since and it nearly breaks my heart to play my scenes with her at night.

And now I send you a little New Year's gift—tho' I fear you will not perhaps care for it: an old battered ring, with my father's crest upon it. I wore it for many years, and hammered it out of all shape trying to impress people with this or that—I preferred sending it to you as it is; but I will have it made round and smooth again for you if you wish. Will you wear it for my sake, dear old fellow, who have done me such great good?

Ever yours,

R. M.

V.

1890 TO 1892.

THE votaries of art, commonly, are possessed of acute sensibility,—fortunate for them, in the main, because without it they could accomplish nothing, but unfortunate for them in at least one respect, because it makes them keenly sensitive to criticism. The actor is especially sensitive, and naturally so, because the exposition of his art involves the presentment of his person, and that condition of circumstance inevitably promotes a vigilant egotism, watchful of praise and censure. Mansfield, devoured by ambition and eagerly anxious to please, was particularly observant of remarks in newspapers, and his spirit was alternately exalted and depressed by them.

January 9, 1890.

My Dear Winter:—

I have read your article in "Harper's" with great interest and especially have I recognized the truth of what you say regarding my appearance in unpleasant characters only—altho' you *do* forget that pleasant characters which are strong characters are very scarce—and the "Prince Karl" and "Monsieur" both are very *sweet*. However, so convinced am I of the truth of what you say and perhaps somewhat by the fact that

"Richard III." is, financially, a disastrous failure, that I have determined to bestow upon the Public, in the future, the smallest amount of artistic labor with the largest possible financial profit. I seek now only a pleasant character and a popular play, and I shall devote myself in the future to that class of work which distinguishes the Monkeys of the Drama,—it amuses the audience and does not fatigue the player. I am a sick, tired and beggared man and out of the ashes of my aspirations will rise a mean, sordid ape.

I am, always,

Yours very truly,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The Croisic, New York,

Sunday, Jan. 19, 1890.

My Dear Winter:—

I am *in medias res* with my little book of songs—I think of connecting them by some few words a la Boccaccio, making the whole an entertainment and calling it "In the Evening: being an entertainment of songs, sketches, suggestions, and burlesques, by Richard Mansfield," and containing the following—each to be illustrated by a good artist:

A suggestion for a National Air.

A Children's Waltz.

A Song Without Words.

"The Broken Harp" (The Poem by William Winter).

"The Curfew" (The Poem by H. W. Longfellow).

"The sea hath its pearls" (The Poem by Heine).

"Star of my heart."

"And love me still."

"In the twilight."

"Sad is my heart."

"Asleep" (The Poem by William Winter).

"Will you tell me, artless maiden?"

How I came to be a King: A Burlesque.

An English Opera: A Burlesque.

The Marmoset Monkey.

"Good Night and Good Morning" (The Poem by Lord Houghton).

"The Silent Pianist" (being a sonata played in silence).

An air for the violoncello.

Etc.

I do not know how to set about publication—what to do? I am so busy it is impossible for me to go down town to Harper's—every moment of my day is occupied. Can you, will you, assist me? Yours ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The Croisic, New York,

My Dear Winter:—

January 30, 1890.

"Master and Man" is here and we are constantly rehearsing.

It is no use disguising the fact: I am in the depths of abject misery—for here is a part that I must study without bringing to it the first symptom of interest or pleasure. Three times I have tried to break off my arrangement with French—but in vain. Destiny. However, it may make so much money that we can do something fine finely, shortly: if it doesn't make money, nobody will be gladder, or drop it in a greater hurry, than your very true, your ever devoted and grateful friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

I have *gotten* the Grippe!

The melodrama of "Master and Man" was withdrawn after a run of two weeks and Mansfield's engagement at Palmer's Theatre was then concluded. A brief tour ensued, with "Richard III." and the old repertory. One letter that he wrote, in the course of that tour, is especially expositive of his indomitable resolution to achieve great renown:

Palmer House, Chicago,
March 16, 1890.

My Dear Winter:—

When I am in bad luck I feel so like shrinking into my shell—I always feel so keenly that nobody wants to know me—that you will understand why I have been cold and disagreeable to you—my best of friends. Things have taken a turn and we are playing to crowded houses—for which I thank God! I am playing nine times a week, and if I can only keep it up I shall soon be myself again. *Work* has never terrified me—THAT you know—but it *did* seem as if the good God had quite forgotten me—or was angry with me—so bad and so sad have affairs been with me of late.

The press here has been more than kind, and has acclaimed me far beyond my deserts. I think *everything* is possible to me, if I am helped, and I feel, more and more, that the future—the immediate future—of the American Stage lies very much in my hands. At all events, I intend laying violent hands on it—*côte que coûte!* I have a most tempting offer to go to Berlin; and I think I shall accept—because I can go there and do great things “right off,” without question—and when I’ve *done* them there it will appear natural to people here that I *should* do them. I have no time to potter backward and forward here, at the whim of the people. Life is too short and too uncertain to waste it in doing small things. I am about to produce a play called “Edmund Kean,” in Boston. Just to try it, that’s all. I have two weeks at the Boston Theatre, and need a play dealing with large effects, and “Edmund Kean” turned up in the nick of time. “Lord Dunmersey” (if I do it at all) I shall reserve for the Madison Square engagement. Next week St. Louis—the Olympic, where I play four plays in one week, opening in “Richard III.” Since I have written so much about myself—write me something about yourself.

Always, always, yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

On May 5, 1890, he again appeared in the capital, beginning an engagement at the Madison Square Theatre, with "A Parisian Romance." In the meanwhile, as shown by letters already quoted, he had been making a play on the life and character of Beau Brummell. The design of a comedy of manners, on that subject, which I had suggested to him long before, was now, after a fashion, fulfilled, and on May 19 he brought forth the drama with which he was to earn much money and largely to augment his fame. That drama lacks substance, is encumbered with trivialities, and is disfigured by caricature of manners and platitude of colloquy; but it is embellished with striking traits of character and with amusing equivoke, it provides an affecting contrast of prosperity and adversity, and it is supplied with two or three moderately effective theatrical situations, such as the experience and ingenuity of an actor might naturally be expected to suggest. It proved a serviceable vehicle for the display of Mansfield's personality and accomplishments, and his acting carried it to success.

The story of the origin and manufacture of the play of "Beau Brummell" is singular and instructive. Early in 1887 Mansfield applied to me, asking for a list of such plays as I might consider expedient for revival, and, in reply to

his request, I directed his attention to several old comedies, long disused. In particular, I mentioned the comedy of "Beau Nash," by Douglas Jerrold, and I sent to him a copy of it, to read. That play contains the well-drawn character of *Richard Nash*, "the Tiberius of a silk stocking" and "by the grace of impudence, King of Bath,"—in his day a remarkable man, of whom there is a biography attributed to no less an author than Oliver Goldsmith,—and also it contains an amusing story, comic incidents, good equivoque, and various pungent examples of the caustic pleasantry for which Jerrold was distinguished. Mansfield read "Beau Nash," and, although he decided that it was not practicable for his use, he derived from it the idea of acting a Beau,—an idea which had not previously occurred to him. When next we met the subject was discussed, and I then suggested to him that incidents in the life of another beau, the celebrated Beau Brummell, might be utilized in a dramatic form. I particularly specified a passage in Captain Jesse's elaborate memoir of Brummell, in which there is a suggestive record of Brummell's reception of phantom guests, when he was a demented, impoverished exile, at Caen, in France, and I said that it could be expanded into a dramatic and pathetic closing scene. Mansfield expressed cordial approba-

tion of the subject and of the scheme, and earnestly requested that I would write a play for him, with Brummell as the hero of it. I did not promise to comply with his request, but said I would consider it, and, a few days later, I sent to him, in writing, the plan of a drama.

The scene was to be laid partly at Oatlands, near Weybridge, in beautiful Surrey (Oatlands being a mansion that was once a palace and now is an hotel), partly in London, and partly at Caen. *Brummell* was to be represented as a noble person, irreproachable in character, magnanimous in spirit, stately and elegant in manners, and the fable was to be suited to the man. *Brummell* was to intervene in an affair of gallantry, and, under romantic circumstances, to rescue a beautiful girl from the persecution of his friend the wanton *Prince of Wales*, afterward *King George the Fourth*, and in that way to incur the enmity of that royal profligate. Then he was to become enamoured of the girl, and, upon his impassioned solicitation, she was to give him a promise of marriage, dictated by her grateful sense of obligation. Later he was to ascertain, by chance, that, secretly, her affections were fixed upon a handsome and accomplished but impecunious young man, and thereupon he was to make the welfare and happiness of the girl and her lover the chief object of his solicitous, practical, paternal

care. He was, incidentally, to rescue the youth from the peril of the gaming table,—a device which would have permitted a sparkling representative scene at Watier's, Brookes's, or White's (it is recorded that once Brummell actually did thus befriend a lad); then to provide a competence for him; and then, with firm, stoical abnegation of self, to procure the betrothal of the young lovers: finally, having incidentally encompassed his own financial ruin, he was to go to Caen, in France, there, in penury, to endure the pangs of want; there, at a phantom feast, to welcome the phantom shapes of noble lords and ladies, the companions of his better days; and there to expire, after having been found by his old friends. Upon that plan I believed that a practicable play could be written. I was not then aware that the authentic incident of Brummell's insane reception of imaginary visitors had been used in a play, but long afterward I read a two-act piece by Blanchard Jerrold,—a trivial fabric, of no practical use,—in which the incident of the phantom guests is employed.

Mansfield, pleased with my plan, reiterated his request that I would write the play, but, being burdened with other tasks and duties, I declined to undertake that labor, and so for a while the project slept. It had, however, taken firm root in his mind, and, ultimately, he determined to write the play himself,—

which he was well qualified to do; but, as he was acting, he would not devote himself to a literary pursuit, and presently he employed Mr. W. C. Fitch, who had been commended to his attention by his friend Edward A. Dithmar, the esteemed journalist, at one time dramatic editor of "The New York Times," and, changing my plan, without improving it (a plan which his assistant, meanwhile, read), Mansfield fashioned the play of "Beau Brummell," dictating to that assistant the greater part of the colloquy contained in it, but allowing Mr. Fitch to write dialogues from notes and from memory of his talk. That statement was made to me, by the actor, in explanation, with marked emphasis, over and over again, in speaking and in writing, and upon Mansfield's authority I repeat it here: he said, also, that the play was composed mostly at the Continental Hotel, Philadelphia. Some of the more piquant lines in the dialogue in "Beau Brummell" were taken from Captain Jesse's biography; others were taken from earlier plays; others were supplied by Mansfield, who had a particularly happy knack of odd witticism. One colloquy was "conveyed" from Peacock's "Nightmare Abbey,"—a book that I once mentioned to Mansfield as among the most quaint compositions in our language. The plan of choosing Brummell as the subject of a drama



GEORGE BRUMMELL, THE FAMOUS BEAU, IN YOUTH
From an Old Print

and the plan of idealizing his character were mine, and so was a general scheme for the conduct of the plot. Mansfield and his amanuensis possessed my original written outline of story, together with the substance of many hints and suggestions made to the actor, in conversation and in various letters, upon which to build, and it was, and is, my opinion, that they might have built upon that basis with better judgment and better taste. Brummell, in actual life, was a voluptuary. For the purposes of a drama it was imperative that he should be rehabilitated. That I had prescribed, and that was done. Mansfield's acting, even in a caricature of manners and circumstances, made him a magnanimous gentleman, and invested him with a romantic and pathetic charm, while the long-continued success of the play,—in which, while Mansfield lived to present it, *Brummell* was always an attractive figure,—made Mr. Fitch, who contributed to it scarcely anything except clerical labor, a prosperous dramatist. There came a time, so Mansfield told me, when that writer had so thoroughly convinced himself that he was the "creator" of "Beau Brummell," that, in Mansfield's presence, and in that of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Kendal, he gravely informed his auditors that, originally, he had intended the play for Henry Irving! It should be mentioned, also, as

one more of many examples of the sheep-like character of most actors, that as soon as Mansfield had made a hit with *Beau Brummell*, a crop of Beaus sprung up, all over the stage. H. Beerbohm-Tree, in particular, brought forth, November 3, 1890, at the Haymarket Theatre, London, a play called "Beau Austin," by Robert Louis Stevenson and W. E. Henley; and even Blanchard Jerrold's thin play was revived. Letters from Mansfield substantiate this account of the origin and composition of the drama of "Beau Brummell." The statements here made, on this subject, were widely published during the lifetime of Mr. Fitch, and they were not, and could not be, successfully disputed, either by him or by any other person. Mr. Fitch died, at Chalons-sur-Marne, France, on September 4, 1909. He was a man of talent and he wrote several serviceable plays, but he was not the author of the play of "Beau Brummell."

The opinion of the actor on this subject is intimated in the following letter, written twelve days after the first performance of the play, when the success of the production had been confirmed by continued good attendance and a generally favorable press, and when it seemed likely that his presentment of the Dandy was destined to have a long career:

The Croisic, New York,

May 31, 1890.

My Dear Winter:—

You are quite right—only too right in what you say about Fitch—and he has not even had the grace to thank. If he *is* capable—fortune is now within his grasp. But he has acknowledged to no one his indebtedness to me or to you. Of course I can say nothing.

I am so glad—so very glad you liked the sketch in Harper's—praise from you is praise indeed.

Indeed I have thought of your poem—it is always on the music rack on the piano, and I will play over to you what I have attempted, when we meet—which pray let be soon.

Thank God there is no truth in the paragraphs about Beatrice! She is much better and getting stronger. She injured her health in playing that accursed Ibsen, and in the many years of constant hard work and travelling. She is in Berne.

Send me word when to expect you,—so that I may be quite free.

Always yours all,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The time came when Mansfield, because of a vituperative attack upon him, relative to the authorship of "Beau Brummell," felt at liberty to make a public statement on that subject, and did make it,—in the form of a letter, published, on April 15, 1891, in which he said:

Boston, April 13, 1891.

I owe it, perhaps, to Mr. William Winter, in the face of Mr. C. Fitch's letter to "The Boston Evening Transcript," to say that Mr. Winter's statements are *absolutely correct*.

Mr. Fitch's letter to "The Transcript" is a disfiguration of facts. Mr. Fitch was engaged by me to write the play of "Beau Brummell," and I promised to use his name as author. He would still *be figuring as such* but for his own folly and ingratitude.

Mr. Fitch did NOT write "Beau Brummell"—except with his pen.

Mr. Fitch has only to be asked these questions:

Did you invent the plot? Did you invent any single situation? Did you invent or create any one character? Did you have any single original idea for any one of the characters? Did you even give names to the characters? Did you invent the climax of any act or scene? Did you invent any bit of business? How many of the speeches now spoken are yours?

Mr. Fitch's position has been a preposterous one. His ingratitude has been amazing. One sample alone suffices: Mr. Fitch carried *my* play and *my* property with him to London, and read it to Mr. Beerbohm-Tree—who, thereupon, produced "Beau Austin."

Your obedient servant,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The *Brummell* season at the Madison Square Theatre in 1890 lasted from May 19 till October 25. "Beau Brummell" was acted 150 consecutive times, and was then taken on a tour of other cities, Mansfield's impersonation of the Dandy being everywhere received with favor. He was not, however, contented; he wished for something new, and he again took up the subject of "Don Juan," renewing his request that I would coöperate with him in writing a play upon that old story. With that

request I did not comply, and it may as well here be said that I had nothing to do with his tragedy of "Don Juan," as it was finally fashioned, except to admire it and to recognize and celebrate its merit. At this time he first thought of assuming the cares of managing a theatre in New York, and, incidentally, he conjured up one of those bug-bears of professional antagonism with which, throughout life, his fancy was too readily oppressed:

Leland Hotel, Chicago,
December 8, 1890.

My Dear Winter:—

Your delightful book—your charming essay in Harper's—both received, and I thank you for remembering me—I hope you are not working too hard. Could you not leave for a little holiday, and spend next week with me here, in Chicago, and do some work on "Don Juan"? I have written out the first act roughly, and it is ready for *you*. But the play needs thorough discussion. Also we must talk over plans for the future—and everything for which I like to come to you for guidance. Pray come if you can—and I am sure it will do you good.

I am aware of a cabal (with ghoul — at its head) to keep me from the throne I am striving for—in this cabal are Palmer, Frohman, Daly, Barrett, and Booth—the latter may be innocently. Their object is to establish an English actor named Willard, in New York—but I cannot for the life of me see what particular good he is likely to do anybody; his coadjutor is Hatton. These people are all after dollars—that is the alpha and omega of their ambition and their existence.

I may take a trip to California, but I shall be in New York shortly, for I play in Brooklyn and at Hammerstein's in February. In October I shall open my new theatre. You

have always been my best friend—I have leant upon you *largely* for advice in the past—I want to know if you will be heart and soul with me in the future? I shall never do anything to disgrace you, but I must say I need your earnest, your true support. I cannot work *all* alone, and I *am* all alone.

Do come on here if you can possibly manage it, and we will talk of everything. What about Christmas? Where do you spend it? Bring the boy, and spend it with me?

God bless you, old fellow,

And believe me,

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The English actor, Edward S. Willard, to whom such ungracious reference is made in the above letter, made his first appearance in America on November 10, 1890, at Palmer's Theatre, in Henry Arthur Jones's excellent play of "The Middleman," and, in the character of *Cyrus Blenkarn*, gave one of the noblest impersonations that have ever, in our time, been set before the public. There was no occasion for Mansfield, or any other self-respecting actor, to be troubled on this subject, for the success of such an actor as Mr. Willard, which then and later was decisive and abundant, could only result in dignifying the stage and intensifying the public interest in it,—a consequence manifestly advantageous to *all* its votaries.

Early in 1891 Mansfield again acted in New York, this time at the Garden Theatre. The

engagement was a short one, beginning on January 5 and ending on January 31, and it was devoted to "Beau Brummell" and to an improved version of "Prince Karl." An afternoon performance of Ibsen's play of "A Doll's House" was, incidentally, given, and Miss Cameron repeated her good personation of *Nora*. The play of "A Doll's House," which, apparently, was written for the sapient purpose of declaring that a wife should be her husband's companion and friend and not his plaything, is mawkish and tedious, but Miss Cameron infused a winning personality into the part of *Nora*, and commended a dull theme to acceptance by her piquant and sustained vivacity, her occasional intimations of sentiment and of maternal feeling, and, in the moment of the hysterical dance (the only dramatic passage in the play), her truthful simulation of artificial glee conflicting with genuine terror. Letters which follow refer to that incident and also to a musical experiment that Mansfield made, in Washington, to which city he repaired, beginning another tour, as soon as his New York engagement had closed.

February 7, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

Thank you—thank you—thank you, for your great kindness to me; you are always the same true friend. And thank you

for your encouragement of Beatrice—she has talked of nothing else since. How great to be able to bestow so much happiness!

Next Thursday afternoon there is to be given at Albaugh's Theatre, Washington, a Concert of Songs, Grave and Gay, written by myself. Two songs of yours will be sung and a new National Air dedicated to the People of this Country is to be sung by a boys' choir and played by a full orchestra. It will be an interesting event, I think. I hope for the President and his wife—all the Foreign Ministers—Congress and Society—will *you* come, my dear friend, and be my guest,—come on Thursday. The songs of yours will be "Asleep" and "The Broken Harp." I shall say in the programme "the *poem* by William Winter." I dislike "the *words*." Say you will come. It will be delightful.

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The concert in Washington, devised partly to please himself and partly as an expert scheme for attracting a more considerable public attention, duly occurred, was attended by a fine audience, and gave much pleasure. As usual, I could not accept Mansfield's invitation to be present, and therefore, as on many similar occasions, incurred his censure,—for he was always particularly resentful upon the declination of any proffered hospitality. Later he described the performance:

Buffalo, New York,

February 20, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

My little Concert amusement cost \$1,000, and the songs were so wretchedly sung that I left the house. The effect upon the

people, however, seems to have been quite at odds with mine own feelings in the matter, and everybody was loud in praise, and the audience remained calling for me for fully fifteen minutes. The man who sang "Asleep" murdered sleep—and the woman who sang "The Broken Harp" (it should have been sung by a man), had no heart. But you cannot give these people their feelings at \$50.00 a song, and I could not afford a Scalchi or a Patti or a Santley. There you are: in future I'll sing them myself—voice or no voice! However, your songs were very much admired and *vous voilà!* I am over head and ears in work. Pray are you doing anything on "Don Juan"—I may need it first; in fact if I can only get it ready; if I only have the time, I think it is a safer venture than "The Man Without a Shadow," which in any case would only go for a very few weeks—? Let me know what you think? If you would dispatch the First Act to me—but no; I shall be in New York Holy Week, March 23, and that will be time enough, or in Philadelphia, March 9th.

God bless you, old fellow! I am,

Quite yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Friends of his have reason to remember that, on many a festal night, in later times of happy companionship, he sang those songs, for which he had written such lovely music, and, commingling frolic with feeling, caused the hours to pass swiftly,—for he sang with deep feeling as well as consummate skill, and when in a genial mood his companionship was delightful. The programme of that concert was the basis of his book, called "One Evening," to which he refers in the following letter:

Colonnade Hotel, Philadelphia,

March 5, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

All your kind letters rec'd. I am compelled to finish "Don Juan," in case the other and lighter plays should not be ready. I intend to print "Don Juan" and before doing so I want you to correct my English, and make suggestions. I shall be in New York Holy Week—do try to keep it open for *me*—I must see a great deal of you. If there is a hotel at Tompkinsville, near you, I think I will come and stay there for a day, near you, if I may, and we can talk over everything

I like the weird story you sent me—but to make a successful play I am leaving out as much as ever possible of any such element. For the Third Act I am stealing the situation with the *Duchess de Guise* in "Henry III." (Dumas).

"Don Juan" will be a strong play—a new play. I shall not open with it, if I can help it. If "The Man Without a Shadow" proves too thin—and it looks that way now—I am thinking (but 'tis to be kept secret at present) of a dramatisation of Rudyard Kipling's "The Light That Failed," a most sweet, pathetic story.

My little book I can give no thought to at present—I am so hard worked that I have not been in the fresh air for five days now. I have left my rooms only to go to the Theatre. In the summer months I shall have ample leisure to bring it out.

I should particularly like it to be understood that the Garden Theatre is now *my house of production*, as Daly's or Palmer's by arrangement with Mr. French, that my company is a stock-company, not a merely supporting organization, and that we only leave the Garden Theatre for a short time as all stock companies do. I occupy the Garden Theatre until my own house uptown is completed.

Ever gratefully your friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

This idea of a "house of production" and a "stock-company" was, undeniably, judicious, but the suggestion of it by Mansfield, though absolutely sincere, could only be viewed as a pleasing fancy. His theory was correct. Every theatre should be managed by an actor, or else by a person possessing the actor's temperament, and in every theatre there should be a good stock-company. But Mansfield could not have conducted a stock-company, nor could he have long remained associated with one,—for he lacked both tact and patience. No actor has appeared, in our time, who more decisively exemplified the peculiar theory of democracy so concisely stated by *King Louis*, in the play: "All subjects!—all subjects; except *me!*" In that respect, though, he was not entirely singular.

Colonnade Hotel, Philadelphia,

March 16, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

I have decided to open at the Garden on May 18th with a *transcription* of Rudyard Kipling's "The Light That Failed." I had nothing to do with this transcription—it has been done entirely by Miss Cameron and Miss Sprague. I have been too busy with "Don Juan"—in whom I am very much interested. I will read to you what I have written. As "Don Juan" would need much costuming, and is a work of some importance (so I venture to think), I do not wish to do it at this season—but to wait until the fall. I *hope* "The Light That Failed" will prove successful—I shall play *Dick*: Miss Cameron *Maisie*: Ferguson *Torphenow*. Have you read the book? It

is a clever and touching story and I *think* taken from real life—indeed, I believe I know the people.

With all affection,

Ever yours,

RICHARD.

His fancy for plays about "The Man Without a Shadow" and "The Light That Failed" was soon discarded. The wish for novel subjects, though, was continuously present in his mind, and many themes for plays, and sometimes new plays themselves, were considered, temporarily approved, and then rejected by him. At this time he had nearly decided to produce a play called "The Great House of Vanbrough," appearing in it as a typical old New York merchant, and at another time his preference inclined toward a play called "Gentleman Waiffe," based on Bulwer-Lytton's novel "What Will He Do With It?" He also thought of acting *Cardinal Mazarin* and *Dean Swift*.

It was surprising that Mansfield did not, at this period of his career, lose heart and utterly break down. He was oppressed with a huge burden of debt; he had been disappointed, to a grievous extent, by the public neglect of his costly revival of "Richard III."; he was acting eight times a week; he was diligently occupied in the writing of his play of "Don Juan" (and much annoyed

because I would not favorably respond to his frequent requests for assistance in that task); he was acutely anxious about the unfinished tragedy of "Nero," and was urging his friend Mr. Sullivan to complete that work; he was studying the part of *Dick*, in a play about Mr. Kipling's story of "The Light That Failed"; and frequently he was the object of harsh disparagement in newspapers,—an injustice which, naturally, prompted resentment and the disposition to "strike back." It was no wonder that he suffered, that he was often ill, and that his temper was exasperated. One specimen of the abuse that followed him is here quoted, because its publication was the cause of the explicit disclosure, already cited, of some of the truth relative to the authorship of "Beau Brummell":

I suppose that Mansfield will devote all his time to "Beau Brummell," in which Boston people will take great interest, as, in a way, they claim its author. Besides that, many people here heard "Beau Brummell" read before Mansfield's manager read it. They will be interested to see how much truth there was in that nasty little report which was circulated in New York to the effect that Mansfield wrote much of that piece. I never heard much about Mansfield's cleverness with his tongue, though it is notorious that he can use it with effect when he is angry. However, it is not a part of his reputation—cleverness of speech. If he has tampered with the play, unless he has changed his humor, he should have written something in that would have enabled him to show his shapely figure, of which he used to be very

proud. At least one must infer it from the fact that a few years ago, when a writer was at work on a play for him, he stipulated that the end of the act should be so arranged that he could come on in his bathing dress. —From "*The Boston Home Journal*," March 28, 1891.

The spiteful tone of that contemptible paragraph, commingling falsehood with meanness and malice, aptly exemplifies the insolence and mendacity with which, for some years, Mansfield was assailed in a section of the American press. The idea of "Beau Brummell" had been suggested to him early in 1887, and the first written document on that subject is dated November 26, of that year,—long before Mr. Fitch had ever met Mansfield or ever heard of "Beau Brummell." Reference to the "contract" (reproduced elsewhere in this memoir), which, in his indiscreet, heedless amiability, Mansfield gave to Mr. Fitch, will discover that it was dated November 11, 1889.

Brooklyn, N. Y.,

April 4, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

I enclose, of course, the clipping from the (Boston) "*Home Journal*," and I am looking forward with fiendish delight to your answer—(and which it is like your kindness and generosity toward me, always, to write). You will certainly burst the frog! The paragraph about my desire to appear in a bathing-suit is *extraordinary*! I never discussed a play with anybody in Boston but T. Russell Sullivan and I am, I think,

the very last man to desire to appear in a bathing-suit. Heaven forbid! It's bad enough at Narragansett! But this discloses the fact that the author of the paragraph at one time or another probably sent me a play which was declined.

You have no conception how greatly your visit yesterday has cheered and encouraged me—of how much good you have done me!—and what result your words will have on my future! You are my dearest and best friend, and I hope I may never in my life be forgetful of your kindness!

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Before the end of April the tragedy of "Don Juan" was finished by Mansfield, while in Boston, where, this time, he prospered, and the completion of his task seemed to set him up in hope.

The Brunswick, Boston,

April 22, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

The play is finished—I sat at it all day yesterday, Sunday—from nine in the morning until six and completed the last act. I locked myself in and remained without food—Beatrice came then to hear me read it to her and I broke down and became *hysterical*. I think I shall never attempt any such task again. Please God it may be a success. Beyond altering the close of the Second Act and rehearsals, study and the playing of it, nothing now remains to be done.

"Don Juan" ends sadly—it would be impossible for me to close the work otherwise, and death dignifies the whole. I have given him a touch of *Ophelia* (in one of the wanderings of his mind I have stolen a description from your lovely book)—what a sweet beautiful book it is—I hope we may both be spared to take those rambles together. I cannot write this

morning—my head buzzes—my hand trembles—there is a dissipation in work as in pleasure. My writing of "Don Juan" will be bitterly attacked—I see that articles are being spat out concerning the relations of author and actor, and the actor is being told that he thinks a great deal too much of himself. He always did—poor Devil! he never could get anybody else to think about him at all. Come on, and let us sit and abuse this very pretty world, for the people that are in it. Come on!

Yours ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The "Home Journal," "The Saturday Evening Gazette" (Wolff) attack me with much and bitter venom. We have, however, so far, played to very fine houses.

The dramatic critic of the "Gazette" at that time, was Benjamin E. Wolff, since deceased,—a man of exceptional talent, rigorous in judgment and often severe in censure. He was also a dramatist, and he is remembered as the author of "The Mighty Dollar," in which play that excellent actor, the late William James Florence, gave so much pleasure and gained so much popularity, as *Hon. Bardwell Slote*. His criticism of Mansfield, probably, did no harm. "Paper pellets" do not injure any man who is using such talent as he possesses, in an honorable manner, for the good of others as well as of himself, but it was ever difficult to persuade him to disregard them, although, in later years, he avoided, to some extent, the reading of newspapers.

New Brighton, Staten Island,

April 23, 1891.

Dear Richard:—

I am delighted to hear that your play of "Don Juan" is finished. Your decision to end it with death is, unquestionably, wise. There could be no other artistic close. I think there ought to be a slight, vague, evanescent tone of omen,—*perhaps* in an occasional strain of music,—all the way through the piece.

I regret you have been made ill. Be very careful of your health. Don't read newspapers, and don't write any more letters or allow any interviews.

Do not mind the words that are written against you. It is only fruit-trees that are stoned,—as the wise Spanish proverb says. Read your "Don Quixote" and be happy. I have every confidence in the success of *Juan*. I wish I could read it before you produce it: but I cannot come to Boston. I cannot leave my work. I am surrounded with difficulties. We *all* are!

Do you begin at the Garden Theatre with "Don Juan"? and on what date?

I am glad you like my "Gray Days," and I wish we *could* ramble together in that lovely land.

Always truly yours,

WILLIAM WINTER.

The Albion, Baltimore,

April 29, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

I return to town next week. I shall produce "Don Juan" either May 18 or May 25. We may not be ready before the latter date. I find the Second Act needs re-writing in part, and it worries me. However it has to be done—please God it may be a success, so that I may rest a little—I am almost tired out.

I hear that "Frederick Lemaitre" was a mass of rubbish founded upon a good little story taken from a French news-

paper. The language, I hear, is empty persiflage—and that is all that young man can do; he is a windbag. He has gone to Europe to produce "*all his plays*"!

The beautiful weather sets me a-longing for the country. I am ever cooped up within doors. I never see the trees and the flowers in the country (unless thro' a railroad carriage window). I am weary, weary. Pray come to town as soon as I get back—I need you. I am disgruntled and I have one of my "throw everything away" moods upon me.

Yours ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Early in May he once more appeared in the capital, beginning, at the Garden Theatre, with "Beau Brummell." On May 18 he presented "Don Juan," for the first time on any stage, and he acted the hero of it with consummate skill, splendid vigor, and touching effect. The occasion was one of uncommon interest. The audience was large and not only genial but enthusiastic in its denotements of approbation. The verdict of the metropolitan press, on the next day, was, with some exception, favorable. Yet the play immediately languished, and, after a few neglected representations, it was withdrawn. My first impression of it, which, after careful reading of the piece (it was published in November, 1891), remains unchanged, was expressed to Mansfield in the following note:

After the Play, May 18, 1891,—3 o'clock
in the morning of the 19th.

Dear Old Friend:—

I have only time to write a word. It should be one of congratulation to you, on your brilliant success. You have made out of the old story of "Don Juan" a beautiful play, —in which there is no blemish. And your performance is full of loveliness and thought. I have begun the making of a version of ——— for you, but you won't want to do it for a long time yet. Make the most of your success and happiness.

God bless you!

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WINTER.

R. M.

On this note,—which, with others used in this biography, was returned to me by Mrs. Mansfield, after her husband's death,—the rueful author had written, with pencil, these words:

"This play was an awful failure: not a soul came to see it! ?"

"Don Juan" deserved a better fate, since it is a novel and interesting play. Instead of helping him to pay his debts, however, it served only to retard him in that business,—to which, meanwhile, he had been giving diligent attention. When withdrawn, it was succeeded by revivals of the well-worn plays of his old repertory, on which he could still depend.

On March 26, 1891, Mansfield and his company had come to Staten Island and given a perform-

ance at the theatre of the German Club, at Stapleton, for the benefit of the Arthur Winter Memorial Library, in the Staten Island Academy, appearing in "Prince Karl." This was an unasked, but gratefully appreciated, act of kindness,—that Library having been founded to commemorate a deceased member of my family, and being an object of my solicitous care. One of the comedian's auditors, at the representation of "Prince Karl," was the eminent orator and writer, George William Curtis, who, speaking to me, after the performance had ended, aptly designated Mansfield's embodiment of the whimsical *Prince* as "the perfection of fooling," and warmly extolled the vigor, the sustained vivacity, and the fine finish with which the part had been acted. Mr. Curtis also lauded the performance, in one of his peculiarly graceful Easy Chair papers, in "Harper's Magazine." That commendation became known to Mansfield, and naturally, it gave him pleasure to be praised by one of the most accomplished men of our time.

The Croisic, New York,

May 28, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

I was honored and delighted with the kind and generous words of Mr. Curtis, and I take the liberty of enclosing a note to him, which perhaps you will be kind enough to forward?

"Don Juan" is much improved I think—in appearance cer-

tainly and I hope you will think so. I have been bitterly and cruelly attacked—so much so that for some days I trod the stage with almost shame. The hesitation and doubt of myself has not passed away. Ethel and Beatrice have been very good to me and constantly tell me all manner of flattering lies to keep up my courage and self-esteem—so needful to the miserable play-actor. Something else should be put in rehearsal at once—for we cannot afford to lose any money: \$167,000 is enough in any one man’s lifetime, and the wolves who are howling for my blood should know that.

I am thinking of a Dickensonian character: you once suggested that: what say you now? Will you come and talk it over?

Yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The spring season of 1891 was extended into the summer, when the tireless actor allowed himself to pause,—but not for long. Early in the autumn he reappeared. The next new production that he effected was that of “Nero,” the tragic play which his friend Sullivan had for some time been occupied in composing, under his counsel and urgency, and which was performed, for the first time on any stage, at the Garden Theatre, New York, September 21,—winning some critical favor, but failing to win the necessary practical support of public approbation. It happened to me to be abroad, for a while, in that year, and our interchange of letters became less frequent. He failed not, however, to write to me about “Nero,” and in one letter he sent glad tidings of the most fortunate event of his experience.

September 4, 1891.

My Dear Winter:—

I can only send you one hasty word of thanks for your kind, beautiful letter. I am in all the turmoil of preparation for the production of "The Tragedy of Nero," and it is with serious concern that I learn of your postponed return to this country. It seems to me that America becomes more and more a province of England, and that everything that is good and beautiful here seems to yearn to live *there*. I do, and I am both good and beautiful! "Nero" will be played September 21 and is a Tragedy, *pur et simple*, and the people will probably damn it.

I announce to you my engagement—or the engagement to me of—of sweet and beautiful Beatrice. We shall be married in England next summer and I trust I may prevail upon you to accompany us. Beatrice has refused me seven times seven.

Ever your friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

In your wanderings see what you can find for me, in the shape of some lovely spot by the sea-coast where we may dwell in peace? You know what I like.

In his domestic life Mansfield was peculiarly fortunate. On September 15, 1892, while acting at Daly's Theatre, he wedded the actress known on the stage as Beatrice Cameron,—in private life Miss Susan Hegeman. The marriage occurred at the Church of the Redeemer, Eighty-second Street, in New York. With that companion,—an affectionate, devoted wife, appreciative of his virtues, sympathetic with his ambition, careful of his health, tolerant of his idiosyncrasy, helpful in his labor, and provident in his interest, he passed the remainder



Photograph by Kuebler

BEATRICE CAMERON
(Mrs. Mansfield)

of his days, in as much happiness as it was possible for his restless spirit to know. Without his wife's counsel, comfort, and guidance, indeed, Mansfield, probably, would have become even a more bitter cynic than the *Alceste* whom he represented so well, and, almost certainly, he would have worn himself out much sooner than he did, by injudicious ventures and by hopeless warfare with the world. They had one child, a son, born August 3, 1898, named George Gibbs,—the name of George having been given to him in compliment to the daughter of one of their intimate friends.

Soon after the marriage Mansfield wrote to me, November 8, 1892:

“ You are right. Beatrice and I are,—at least *I* am, with her,—completely happy. She is more beautiful every day. She is completely and absolutely good. I can find (and I am a severe critic) in her not one fault. She is the soul of goodness, and appears to possess every virtue. I am lost in wonderment that any being can be so. ”

Another glimpse of the gentle spirit of his Beatrice is here afforded:

Plaza Hotel, New York,

My Dear Winter:—

November 7, 1891.

We go to Boston on Sunday by the 11 o'clock train from the Grand Central, and I stay at the Copley Square Hotel (a new house).

Poor Beatrice went to Troy on Wednesday—to the bedside of her dying brother Byram. The enclosed telegram tells its

own sad tale. Byram Hegeman was only sixteen years old, and Beatrice was deeply attached to him. She had sent him to school and had taken all the cares of his education upon herself. He seems to have been beyond others bright and gentle and affectionate. She took great pride in him. It is a terrible blow—an incomprehensible ordaining. It seems that those beautiful words, "Es ist bestimmt in Gotte's Rath"—it is ordained by God's decree that those who love must parted be—are true.

I feel the blow for Beatrice's sake almost as keenly as she must—and I fear she is almost heart-broken. I would you were with her. I can write no more just now.

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

As he had prognosticated the doom of "Nero,"—namely, that, being a tragedy, it would be damned,—he might, perhaps, have been expected to meet the catastrophe with some degree of philosophic composure, but he had built a golden hope upon that play, and the ill-fortune which it encountered greatly annoyed him. His impatience was freely expressed; sometimes in a way to exacerbate already existent newspaper animosities. In the winter season of 1891-'92, he made a tour, using the old plays, but, privately inciting and assisting the composition of new ones. The subjects upon which his choice then fell were Samuel Warren's fantastic novel of "Ten Thousand a Year" and Hawthorne's solemn, pathetic, heart-rending romance of "The Scarlet Letter."



Photograph by Pach Bros., New York

MANSFIELD AND HIS SON GEORGE GIBBS MANSFIELD

VI.

1892.

EARLY in 1892 Mansfield's book of music called "One Evening" was published. It contains fourteen compositions, alternately serious and humorous; it provides, in the hands of a competent performer, a complete entertainment for a miscellaneous audience, and it is particularly felicitous in playful satire of musical conventionalities. Some of its melodies, suggestive of the style of Dr. Arne, are delicious in their tenderness of feeling and their simplicity. The characteristics of the work are refinement, piquancy, vigor, and grace, and it is strikingly indicative of poetic fancy and versatile faculty of expression.

The first theatrical novelty that he furnished to the public in that season was the drama of "Ten Thousand a Year," written for him, at his suggestion and under his advisement, by Miss Emma V. Sheridan.

On board Private Car, "Pilgrim,"

My dear Winter:—

February 6, 1892.

I am going away now, for a week only, and then return to the Garden Theatre—an engagement I dread, not

only because I seem to arouse the animosity of most of the writers on the N. Y. dailies, but on account of —, who dislikes me as much as I despise and abhor him. He is a low brute—lower, I think, than any animal our natural histories have made us acquainted with!

This coming week I go to Troy, Norwich, Hartford, and for three nights to Providence. Owing to the bad hotels and the much work I have on my hands I shall live on the car.

I should like you to go with us to San Francisco. We start April 11, from New York. I shall have my own car, and a good cook; we shall have a bath, piano, etc., all the comforts of home—and I have thought you might write an amusing book, of the trip—a book written in a whimsical vein—remarks by the way; of our adventures, of all that befalls us; about people and places. We should both have odd fancies and ideas. What do you say?

Regarding "Ten Thousand a Year," I fear it's not much in your vein; altho' I do not know why—it's quaint and comical, and with a touch of pathos, born of *Tittlebat's* true love for *Terese Tagrag*, the daughter of his former employer. *Tessy* will be played by Beatrice, of course. I can't send you the play to read, for it's all in shreds and patches, like a quilt. But I return, February 15, to New York, and surely you can find *one* hour, after the play, for me? My first week at the Garden I shall devote to repertory—Wednesday "The Weather-vane," my new name for "Don Juan," since the old one frightened the ladies.

God bless you, dear old fellow; I wish I saw more of you—what a demnition grind it is!

Yours always,

RICHARD M.

On February 15, 1892, he appeared at the Garden Theatre, as *Beau Brummell*, and on immediately succeeding nights he acted *Prince Karl*, *Don Juan*

(then called by the new name of “The Weather-vane”), *Chevrial*, and *Jekyll and Hyde*. A special rehearsal of “Ten Thousand a Year” was, I remember, attended by his admiring friend Col. E. A. Buck,—one of the best of good fellows,—and by me; and because neither of us expressed enthusiastic approval of the play, Mansfield, on the eve of production, resentfully remarking “You can pick even ‘Othello’ to pieces, if you choose to make fun of it,” dejectedly declared that he would discard his new piece. The venture had, in a financial way, been made; the play was ready, the opening had been announced, and it was essential, having gone so far, to go on to the end. Yet Mansfield, impulsive and mercurial, could with difficulty be reassured and persuaded to give the performance. The cause of his doubt was that, although interested in the character of *Tittlebat*, he knew, from the beginning, that it was useless for the stage, and he found his secret judgment ratified. His performance was a capital exposition of the technical art of acting, but it won no public support. The play was presented on February 23, and it had a career of three weeks. The rest of the engagement, which lasted till April 9, was devoted to repetitions of old parts. Twice he reverted to “Titmouse,” but the play was always a disappointment to him.

4 West 28th Street,
New York, March 11, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

“Ten Thousand a Year” was put on a week too soon, and it is no doubt great rubbish, but it was the *only* thing that offered—there was absolutely nothing else, and to have attempted a tragedy would have meant a great financial loss. Heaven only knows what we are drifting to—nobody writes plays, and everybody but you discourages sincere and ambitious effort—it is quite enough for me to announce a new play for the hornets to gather. I shall, probably, have to give up any attempt in this city. I should like to consult with you—can you find time to come to my new ranch?

Always your grateful friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It was made known to me, at this time, that Augustin Daly (1838-1899),—long the foremost of American dramatic managers, as he continued to be till his death,—had thought of forming a combination that would directly compete, in serious drama and in tragedy, with the powerful alliance of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. No motive is more conducive to excellence in the dramatic art than that of ambitious emulation, and as soon as Daly spoke to me on this subject, which he did very earnestly, my sympathy was enlisted. His purpose, not positively defined but clearly indicated, was to present Miss Ada Rehan in more massive characters than any that she had yet assumed, and he discussed with me the expediency of her appearance as *Queen*

Margaret, in "Henry VI." and "Richard III.," as *Lady Macbeth*, and as *Cleopatra*, in sumptuous revivals of Shakespearean tragedy. An imperative preliminary to the accomplishment of such a purpose was the engagement of an actor of proved ability in tragic parts, and of commanding reputation. It seemed to me that, beyond question, Mansfield was the *actor*, but I doubted if he was the man. His peculiarities and those of Daly were known to me. With Mansfield, always, where Macgregor sat was the head of the table. Daly, one of the greatest of stage-managers, was, nevertheless, prone to over-scrupulous interference with his actors, in matters alike of ideal and execution. Nevertheless I ventured to suggest to Mansfield the idea of a professional union with Daly. He seemed much pleased, at first, declaring that such an association, if practicable, might relieve him from the cares of management, of which he was very weary, and at the same time open a wide field of artistic opportunity. He had not then acted *Shylock*, and he especially remarked on the possibility of appearing in that character, with Ada Rehan as *Portia*. After considerable meditation on the subject,—for he was a little hesitant about making an overture,—Mansfield wrote to me as follows:

4 West 28th Street,
New York, March 13, 1892.

My dear Winter:—

I now wish to *ask* you if you would see Mr. Daly for me. I am greatly hampered for want of a theatre and at the same time I fear to load myself with its responsibilities, when I have already so much on my hands. It occurs to me that the following arrangement could be made:

That Mr. Daly should divide his seasons equally between Miss Rehan and myself: i.e., that he should produce, for a part of the season, plays in which Miss Rehan would be prominent, and that she should then (greatly to Mr. Daly's advantage) visit the principal cities,—when I would come in and produce, in conjunction with and under Mr. Daly's management, such plays as we might mutually agree upon and devise. I think in this way great plays could be done at Mr. Daly's Theatre. We could go into all the archæology of the things, and we could paint and dress our plays as they have never been dressed and painted before. I should be associated with a man who is certainly sincere in his devotion to the Arts.

Of course Miss Cameron would be with me as my principal support—but, outside of that, Mr. Daly's forces would assist me:—i.e., Mr. Daly would have a sufficiently large army to support both Miss Rehan and myself, and he would be able to change them about in accordance with the exigencies of the plays produced. I draw very large houses in the country, and I would, of course, give Mr. Daly a handsome percentage of my earnings out of the metropolis.

If such an arrangement as I propose could be effected with Mr. Daly I should be, of course, under Mr. Daly's management and we could always play to advanced prices in the country, and I think Mr. Daly would be master of the two most powerful organizations in America.

What do you say? Will you, as a mutual friend, submit to Mr. Daly this project?

When shall I see you? With all good greetings
Truly always your grateful friend

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

N. B.—I may add that I am urged to this combination with Mr. Daly very largely by the fact that upon every side new Theatres, managed by speculators only, are springing up, and that Mr. Daly is the only man in this country who seems to have the interests of art at heart, and that I must stand shoulder to shoulder with the older man.

In submitting that letter to the attention of Daly I suggested that it might prove feasible to form an alliance with Mansfield for a term of years and to begin with a splendid production of "The Merchant of Venice," and supplement that with a magnificent revival of "Antony and Cleopatra." But, with my private opinion of what was likely to happen when Mansfield came upon Daly's stage to rehearse, and Daly began to direct, I asked the latter: "Do you think that you and Mansfield can work together in harmony?" "Oh, yes," he replied; "I shall have one grand row, at first, as I did with Fechter, and after that there will be no trouble. It has always been so." Knowing both men exceedingly well I could not take that rosy view of the probable event. Mansfield, however, was apprized that Daly wished to confer with him, and during two or three months negotiations were pending between them.

4 West 28th Street, N. Y.

March 23, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

I am very grateful to you for your kindness in speaking to Mr. Daly for me, and I should much like to meet him. But any arrangement which would leave out Miss Cameron would, of course, be impossible, in view of our approaching alliance.

I am anxious to see Lord Tennyson's play, and I hope to be able to do so. I fear Englishmen will take a poor view of Americans, and their reception of Lord Tennyson's work, from "The Herald," which, I am sorry to say, is more read in England, and more quoted, than any other journal from here,—and it is to be deeply regretted that such an incompetent and conceited and brutal numskull should be allowed to write as he does of the noble work Mr. Daly has so beautifully and generously produced.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The play, by Tennyson, to which this letter alludes, is "The Foresters," which was produced at Daly's Theatre, New York, March 18, 1892, and was performed there, much to the enjoyment of the public, till the afternoon of April 23,—the season closing that night, with "As You Like It." In "The Foresters" Ada Rehan acted *Marian*, and gave a beautiful performance. That play was originally written for Henry Irving, who suggested to Tennyson the introduction of the Fairies, and had intended to act the gallant and generous outlaw, *Robin Hood*, while Ellen Terry would have assumed the character of *Marian*: but, ultimately, Irving

did not find the drama practicable for his use. Later it was obtained by Daly, who, with the author's reluctant consent, made changes in it,—transposing an act and providing ingenious and beautiful pageantry, with lovely music, by Sir Arthur Sullivan,—and successfully produced it.

Various obstacles prevented an immediate meeting between Daly and Mansfield, though both were wishful that it should occur. Meanwhile the actor wrote as follows:

4 West 28th Street,
March 28, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

I suppose I ought to have been more explicit in my telegram to you, or did you, perhaps, never get it? I suggested a meeting for last evening, and I hoped you would come; refused some invitations, and passed a solitary and doleful night,—most mournful.

I should be very happy to meet Mr. Daly, if it can be done, and have a good long talk with him,—but we are both busy men; *I* especially so, just now, with all these preparations going forward. But any night you say—here, where no one will see us; after the play; we three, and pipes, in my Club Room. (I have a Club Room all to myself—it is my own Club—I have elected you President—it is called “The Winter Club”—we have churchwarden pipes—at least *I* have—and drinks; there are three pictures on the wall in the room: Winter, the Prince of Wales, and myself—and I'm d—— if I know which of the three is the greater villain!)

If this—if *anything*—is to be done in this matter, it must be brought about at once, as otherwise I shall have to close with the Fifth Avenue Theatre; stay out of New York altogether I

cannot. I want to see you *at once*, on many subjects. "Nero," of course, you can read—if you want to: *I* shouldn't! Will you come up to-morrow?—if so I'll sleep until four in the afternoon, and get up to receive you.

I have lost about \$8,000 this time, in New York, and I am feeling particularly light and buoyant; there is no heavy, weighty, bloated, ponderance about *me*! I'm all for lightness and airiness; in fact, I shouldn't wonder if I went up—up—up, altogether. Come and see me. Would Mr. Daly drop all ceremony, and come with you? Or must we all be Dry-as-dusts?

Ever your grateful friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

An appointment was made. The high contracting powers were to meet. Good results might have followed. I cannot tell, nor does it signify now. Mansfield, always quick at taking fancies, was at times suspicious and prone to believe himself the object of wily intrigue. I was not surprised, accordingly, to receive the subjoined letter, which sufficiently indicated that these negotiations would reach no practical result.

4 West 28th Street,

April 1, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

I am sorry I could not meet Mr. Daly on Wednesday, for I play a *matinée* on that day. It would be out of the question for me to give up my position as an actor and enter Mr. Daly's company. Why should I? My profits, according to my books, show \$2,000 a week. If I spend it, that is my business. But it will be time enough when I am a failure to think of stepping down from my perch. I desire to do great plays and to do them greatly, and I desire to do *new* things. The world must

move on—on—not back, and I shall move on also; perhaps
up—perhaps *out*. Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

N. B.—I need not say that I shall be most happy to meet
Mr. Daly—I have long desired to know him.

Mansfield and Daly met and talked, for an hour, on April 6,—not in my presence, but I was subsequently informed of their interview. Nothing came of it. Mansfield, however, at that time, declared Daly to be a delightful man. Each possessed strong will, dogged determination, and great self-confidence. Both could be charming, when they wished to be; neither was readily compliable with circumstances. They never could have agreed. They continued to correspond, however, for some time, and this episode of theatrical history is instructively illustrated by the letters that Mansfield addressed to Daly, while the project of their alliance was under consideration.

4 West 28th Street,
New York, April 8, 1892.

My Dear Mr. Daly:—

We are in such a rush and whirl of work, and I have such a peculiarly hard day's work before me, that I cannot come across to see you, as I should wish to do. And I do not even know that I can very clearly reply to your question.

One thing is very distinct in my mind, and that is the impossibility and the inadvisability of making an appearance here other-

wise than as a star of the first magnitude. I owe that much to the managers of other cities, who render me 65, 70 and 80 per cent. of the receipts. Otherwise I am glad and happy (more happy than I can say) to make any arrangement whereby I should gain the benefit of your advice and experience and your admirable management.

It seems to me that, as I should have to travel with the production, instantly upon the termination of the season at your Theatre, I should be supported by the company that has played with me there. It seems to me that that company should be selected and engaged by *you*, and that they should be under your direction: of course this company should be engaged with a view to its ability to play my repertoire, as many cities require me to play such plays of mine as have become popular, and in very many cities I have not yet appeared at all—I think *I* should like: “Mr. Richard Mansfield supported by Mr. Daly’s Company and under the management of Mr. Augustin Daly.”

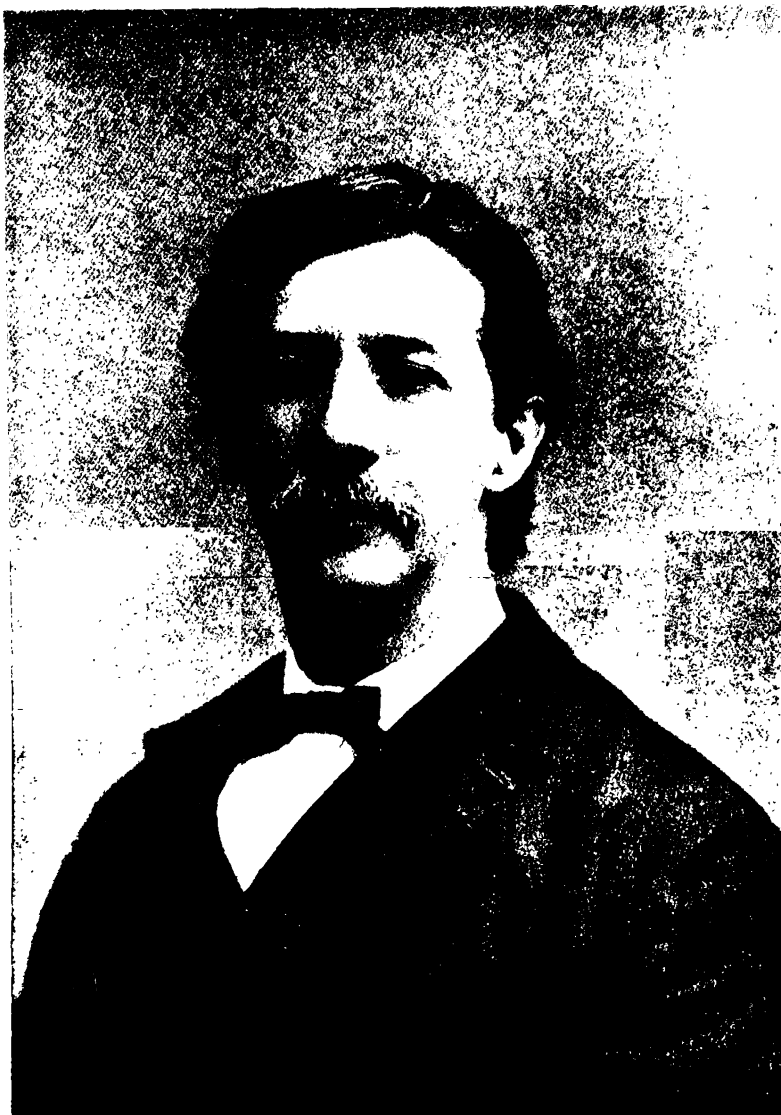
It seems to me that, with my strength in the country, this combination would be as successful as the late Barrett and Booth arrangement—and more satisfactory—in New York proper. Whenever I play at your Theatre I am satisfied with a salary—or any arrangement you would make. I should stipulate that Miss Cameron should always appear in my support, if there is any suitable part.

It’s a great pity I may not see you. I do not think letters are satisfactory—there is so much to be said pro and con. I leave to-morrow, at 4.30, from Weehawken. If you *would* be very gracious and take a day off? I have my car and we could settle everything and chat quietly—but, as I have already said, any arrangement whereby I am enabled to give all my attention *to acting*, and which does not lessen my position but which must heighten my position, is satisfactory to me.

With kindest regards and a thousand apologies for this incoherent scrawl,

Most truly yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.



AUGUSTIN DALY IN 1892

On Private Car.

Los Angeles, May 20, 1892.

My Dear Mr. Daly:—

I thank you for your letter, and which I was awaiting with impatience. I quite comprehend all you say, and I wish with all my heart that it could be otherwise. I would very gladly give up a large share of my profits to be with such a master as you, and to be guided and directed by you. But I cannot sink my identity, and I cannot give up the little I have accomplished in the past years of incessant labor. My name must be upon my banner as the actor;—the management, and all authority and authorship, I will joyfully relinquish.

I am exceedingly ambitious and I confess it. I desire to produce great plays and to play them greatly, and with God's aid I shall accomplish this. If I could have such a man as you by my side it would be accomplished sooner. I have no Theatre, I have no workshop, I have little or no management. I should like to acquire the management and the workshop and I should like advice and guidance. I cannot very well see myself always—which is as unfortunate as it is fortunate.

The scheme I had in mind does not seem to meet with your approval. It was simply that, when your own special company was away from your Theatre, you should play me and my company, or *me* supported by a company of yours. But, failing this, I shall be glad to play in your Theatre, and I shall be very glad and very grateful for your advice. If this meets with your approval all that remains is for us to arrange the time, and to settle on the play. If for the latter you can advise me, or if you can supply me, I should indeed be glad.

I had almost ventured to hope that you would take sufficient interest in me to find the play and the company, and whatever terms you might indicate I should be most happy to accept.

My books are always open to you, and you will see that I make an average profit (with an expense of \$2,200,—\$2,300 a week), of from \$1,000 to \$2,000 a week; my responsibilities in the past have been very heavy, and are so still, and I could

not therefore afford to do less well than I have been, and *am*, doing.

Please believe me to be, dear Mr. Daly, with great regard,
Always yours truly,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

To Augustin Daly, Esqr.

Portland, Ore.,

Monday, June 6, 1892.

My Dear Mr. Daly:—

I am in receipt of your letter, for which accept my best thanks. I have said I shall be delighted to play with you and under your direction.

With regard to M. Coquelin's version of "The Taming of the Shrew": it occurs to me that it would be quaint to play a Frenchman's version of Shakespeare translated back into English. It seems to me "une chose impossible." I might play it in French and I should be glad to do so—but in English, No—it would be too queer. I fear there could be but one cry: What is the matter with Shakespeare?

Then, too, who could play *Katharina* after Miss Rehan? Who *would*? I fear this is not to be done, unless—as I have said—I did it in French.

Jerome's translation of "Die Ehre," on the other hand, seems an excellent idea, and one I should be glad to entertain, if, after reading the play, I find the character I should have to present suitable and interesting,—which, since *you* think it so, no doubt it is. (I interject a little idea here—some day, when we want to sweep the country, let us play "The Merchant of Venice,"—Miss Rehan as *Portia*, and for me *Shylock*, with an ideal Venice. Lewis as *Launcelot Gobbo*, etc., etc.)

The terms you mention are perfectly satisfactory. It would be, in my opinion—and I speak from experience—idle to open with "Beau Brummell," or any of my well-worn plays, in New York. We need more than a success *d'estime*,—we need money, and "Beau B." will not, for a year to come, draw one dollar

in New York. Nor any of my plays, excepting "Richard III.," and of that I have no longer the scenery.

I have an idea, which I advance with considerable hesitation, and which has been in my mind for some years, and in which, from what I can gather, there is a large amount of money, but it will, in its execution, demand an enormous amount of care and thought, some literary effort and some money. It is "Napoleon Bonaparte." I should call the play simply "Napoleon Bonaparte," and I should deal with the subject from the period of his assumption of the imperial purple to the time of his lonely death on the Island of St. Helena.

I wonder if you would help me with this? It would make a great popular play; it would appeal to all classes and all peoples. I should make Mme. Récamier the heroine. I should introduce the beloved Queen Louisa of Prussia, Josephine, and Marie Louise of Austria. I beg you, in any event, to consider this suggestion absolutely confidential, and it is, I feel, hardly necessary for me to say this. I do not know where to address this, so I send it to the Hollis Street Theatre, in the hope that it may reach you.

I do earnestly hope I may be able to arrange to play in *your* home, but it has to be swiftly decided, as others are waiting to hear from me with regard to that time (in September).

Most truly yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

After this affair had passed, as there was no secret about the matter, I chanced to mention to Irving my propitious view of a professional alliance between Mansfield and Miss Rehan. He smiled, in his satiric manner, and playfully remarked: "Very interesting—ah, yes, very. So you wanted to put another *Richmond* in the field, eh? Daly's

been up to that for a long time: he wanted Terriss to leave me and come over to him." Well; there cannot be too many Richmonds in the field; every good actor in a position of influence is a stimulant to other good actors, and so I told him, and with that rational proposition he fully agreed.

The only practical result of the correspondence was an agreement that Mansfield's next appearance in the capital should be made at Daly's Theatre.

Daly did not abandon his plan of forming a professional combination to oppose that of Irving. He not only negotiated with William Terriss,—an actor whose performances of *Squire Thornhill*, in "Olivia," and *Henry the Second*, in "Becket," had he done nothing else, were such as entitle him to honorable remembrance in theatrical annals,—but also contemplated a proposal of the project to Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, and he once thought of effecting it with Mr. Kyrle Bellew—who, indeed, in association with Mrs. Cora Urquhart Potter, acted under his management, in the season of 1895-'96. At the last it was his purpose to accomplish this design by the choice of some young, rising actor, who might prove amenable to his instruction; and he encouraged high expectations as to the future of both Sidney Herbert and Tyrone Power. His untimely death, however, blasted that plan, together

with many other plans and hopes for the advancement and welfare of the stage.

In the spring of 1892 Mansfield made a visit to that romantic section of our country, California. He had been seen there as *Rifflardini* and *Chevrial*; his advent, in new characters, was warmly welcomed. He became, in time, exceedingly fond of California, bought an orange ranch there, and even thought of making his home there; but his first impressions of the Golden State were not favorable, and he communicated them to me, in a highly characteristic strain of banter and censure. He knew that I possessed a little cottage in the San Bernardino Valley, near the wonderful Sierra Madre range, to which I had expressed the intention to retire, in order to spend, in peaceful seclusion, the last days of a long, laborious life,—a purpose which he did not then deem wise. His California engagement began on April 18, at the Baldwin Theatre, San Francisco, with “Beau Brummell.” This was his first letter from the Pacific coast:

On my car.

Valencia & 25th Streets,

San Francisco, April 26, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

Just a line to say all's well. Business not what many people would have one imagine at a distance—but exceedingly good;

good enough to make a very handsome profit, and I don't believe that anybody does any better.

They are queer people here, and very primitive; as for critics, there are none,—but lots of flies; and one side of the street is hot and the other side is cold, and there is an eternal wind blowing, like the tide of doom—I suppose it's the *trade-wind*.

Earthquakes too, we have—and they're very funny; nobody seems to mind them at all. I am living on my car—it's like a yacht, and they have moved me out to Valencia—twenty minutes' ride, by cable car, from the Theatre. The air is good and there are flowers growing all around. I am happy and comfortable, out of the noises and the dust and the crowd and the jangle. San Francisco is the noisiest and most depraved city I have ever been in—it is quite horrible; and it takes a good deal to shock me.

Chinatown is interesting—it is a bit of old China transplanted—even the houses are Chinese: in the Theatre there, they tell me, if an actor displeases, the audience shoots him! Civilization has not advanced as far as that with us—thank Heaven!

Always

Your true and grateful

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

While in San Francisco he gave performances of *Chevrial*, *Prince Karl*, *Titmouse*, *Nero*, *Jekyll* and *Hyde*, and *Don Juan*. He subsequently acted at Fresno, Los Angeles, Stockton, Sacramento, Tacoma, Seattle, Portland, Ogden, Salt Lake City, Denver, Lincoln, Sioux City, and Omaha, ending his tour, at the latter city, on July 2. From Los Angeles he wrote, in a vein of acrid discontent,—yet the place in which, not long afterward, he was

inclined to settle and reside, is not a hundred miles distant from that hospitable and charming city:

On Private Car; Los Angeles, Calif.,
May 20, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

Redlands may be very beautiful—but Los Angeles is not. It is red hot just now, and the town is suffering from scarlet fever and a religious meeting or convention: a person of the name of Mills is exhorting the miserable wretches, to the extent of 10,000 a day, to give up rum and everything else he doesn't like. The city itself is not beautiful, and everything is very primitive. The most painful feature of the city and its immediate vicinity is the lack of foliage—there are no trees, at least, very few, and therefore no shade. It is all sunshine and dust. Irrigation costs a lot of money, and there is no water.

England will suit you better. The eye has no rest here—the mind no peace. Everybody is bragging—because there is nothing to brag about; the beauty of the country,—its marvellous resources; etc., etc.,—is dinned into your ears with painful insistence, until you long to say, "*Damn your country!*"—only one doesn't, and the result is that they really are beginning to believe in their own lying. Redlands may be a Paradise—but again, all this country is volcanic—earthquakes are constant—the country shook again yesterday, and that has an unpleasant sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

Give me England—give me its lanes and hedges, its fields, the skylark, the soft blue sky, the purple haze on the middle distance, the pools and brooks, the rush-fringed rivers, the poplar and the willow, the old cobble church, the ruined arch above the village street, the simple rustic, the country inn, the home-brewed ale—give *me* England!—and damn these electric cars and cable cars, in a damned hot wilderness, where you can't drink the damned alkali water, and where every man

has a right to spit upon your boots, slap you on the back, and brag in your ear; where ignorance and arrogance own the day, and where your gentleness, learning, or gentility are cursed and derided! You won't like it—you *won't* like it! Sell it, and come and live with me and mine, in dear, still *old* England.

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

On his arrival home from the West he entered immediately upon preparation for a presentment of "The Scarlet Letter." A play had been written for him by the English novelist Joseph Hatton, and that subject, which he had long been considering, now engrossed his thoughts. In this case, as in several kindred cases, he deemed that the play required revision and alteration, and he revised and altered it, preparatory to a private reading of it, at my home.

4 West 28th Street, New York,

August 9, 1892.

My Dear Winter:—

It is hard work that keeps me here in mid-summer, and it is for that reason that I have not yet made my trip to Staten Island. I cannot come to you to-day, but I shall be with you to-morrow evening (Wednesday), without fail.

I see no earthly reason why "The Scarlet Letter" should not be put upon the stage, especially if we cling close to Hawthorne. Surely there can be no ridiculous squeamishness concerning the subject—there is hardly a great play that does not deal with the same question, and "The Scarlet Letter" is given to school-girls to read.

As concerns Hawthorne, I have touched his work with great reverence. As concerns my playing *Dimmesdale*, it is as it may be.

Yours ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The reading was duly given, on that August evening, the theme was much and freely discussed, and the spirit of the actor, always supersensitive, was, as far as possible, cheered and encouraged. I did not, however, and could not, believe that the subject of "The Scarlet Letter" would become widely popular when presented on the stage; I perceived not any exceptional felicity in the treatment to which it had been subjected; and I did not express the ardent conviction that the play would fulfil all his hopes and wishes. Mansfield, usually impatient under dissent from his opinions, did not conceal his annoyance that the play was not received with unbounded enthusiasm. His *reading* of it, meanwhile, was delightful,—far more interesting than any *performance* of it ever given: his suggested impersonations, in particular, of the two old beldames, *Hartley* and *Barlow*, were among the most life-like, natural, and effective that it has been my privilege to see; but he was not pleased on being told that they were preferred to his suggested impersonation of the wretched *Dimmesdale*, nor was he

tolerant of even the slightest doubt of the availability of Hawthorne's story for theatrical illustration. There is no "question" in "The Scarlet Letter," no "problem," no obtrusion of sophistical reasoning about unclean subjects, under the pretence of that sickening humbug the moral "lesson." The tale is one of domestic tragedy. Objection to it, for the purpose of the stage, in so far as objection could be made, or has been made, rests on its minutiae of mental analysis, its metaphysical nature (for drama should concern itself more with physics than with metaphysics), its pervasive atmosphere of still and mute agony, and its dense, unrelieved gloom. It should be said, though, that Mansfield accomplished more with this theme than has been accomplished by any other actor that ever touched it. The play was produced by him on September 12, at Daly's Theatre, where it had a run of three weeks. His embodiment of *Dimmesdale* was, from the first, deeply interesting to students of acting, but it was not, at the outset, the rounded, compact, sympathetic performance which subsequently it became,—for, in time, it largely gained in authority, distinction, and finish, and, at its best, was deeply impressive by reason of its melancholy beauty, its pathos, and its thrilling outbursts of tragic emotion.



Photograph, Elite Studio

To William Walter
from his grateful friend
1892. Richard Mansfield

VII.

1893.

AFTER the close (October 1, 1892) of his engagement at Daly's Theatre in "The Scarlet Letter," theatrical enterprise in New York being uncommonly active and dramatic attractions being many and strong, Mansfield deemed it expedient to make a long tour, and he was not again seen in the capital until the autumn of the following year. In the meantime he acted in many cities, throughout the South and West, and made another visit to the Pacific coast; and it happened that, in the spring of 1893, we met in California, under circumstances that were especially agreeable.

San Francisco, on Private Car at
Valencia & 25th Streets,

May 4, 1893.

My Dear Winter:—

I was both delighted and surprised to hear from you and to discover that you are so near—and yet so far. Certes I must see you! You will see from the enclosed that we shall shortly be in your neighborhood, and where will you join us? It would, I presume, be futile to ask you to come here? Shall it be in Riverside? How I envy you—and yet rejoice to know of—that rest and peace you will find at Mentone. I should

like to visit you and peek into it all; but I must hammer, hammer, hammer, on the hard, hard road! and there is no rest. Moreover I am awake day and night, wondering what I am going to do next. Since nobody writes plays, and nobody cares for those that *have* been written, I am in the utmost despair. To present Shakespeare requires a fortune, and I will not risk the little I have saved, in one venture. Moreover, it is time Somebody did a little acting, and if I'm to give out my money I would rather bestow it where it will accomplish some lasting benefit and not squander it in paint and canvas and tinsel, of which I have already a vast storehouse full, the contents of which won't fetch \$5.00 and for which I pay \$700 a year rent—like a d—— fool! And spent \$40,000 or more on the d——ed stuff. It's like that elephant you told me of: "That damned beast eats a ton of hay for breakfast!" I'm for plays without scenery—and without costumes, and in the latter respect I think I shall be hitting the fancy of the present day on the very head! However, join me, and we will curse and damn everybody and everything to the Queen's taste—if she has any.

Yours ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

They tell me Clement Scott has been here, and met a lady by appointment, and married her, and is full of curious ideas concerning Japan,—where he spent a day; he has also acquired a great and sudden admiration for America and Americans. Thank the Lord he isn't here now; or I might see him—and I don't imagine anything more horrible, for he always gives me the impression of a person who is just about to burst.

We met at Riverside, where he acted before a numerous and enthusiastic audience, and from that place travelled to San Bernardino, and being then

only twelve miles from my California home I was able to persuade him to come, with Mrs. Mansfield, and pass a day in our village. They came, accordingly, in his private car, which was placed on a side-track till evening,—when it would be needful for him to return to San Bernardino, to give a performance. Mentone is situated near the eastern extremity of one of the most beautiful valleys in the world. Eastward and northward the prospect is bounded by magnificent, rugged, snow-capped mountains. Southward there is a rolling country, backed by a view of distant mountain peaks. Westward the spacious, widening valley,—here sprinkled with wild flowers and blooming with orange groves and vineyards, there bleak with broad, uncultivated stretches of “brush,”—slopes gradually to the ocean, about ninety miles away. Mansfield no sooner saw the place than he became fascinated by it. The day was the 18th of May. The sunshine was glorious. Great masses of white cloud,—infrequent in those summer skies,—were drifting over the mountains. The cool air was fragrant with the odor of roses and lemon blossoms. The landscape was perfection. Flights of gleaming blackbirds winged over the valley. The sweet, liquid song of the meadow-lark was heard, mingled, now and then, with the low, soft double call of the nesting doves. At that

time luxuriant rows of splendid trees fringed a fine stream of rushing water, a few rods from our dwelling. The whole region seemed a paradise. For an hour or two the delighted actor amused himself by rambling in the adjacent flower-spangled plains. Then, having returned to the house, for luncheon, he suddenly announced, "I must own a ranch here!" No one could, at first, believe that he was in earnest. "Is there a ranch for sale anywhere about?" he asked. Orange groves were, generally, "for sale" in California at that time,—it is even possible to purchase them now,—and he was informed that several neighboring groves were in the market, and that the nearest one, comprising twenty acres, had only lately been offered, at a price which was deemed reasonable. In an instant he rose, seized his hat, and started for the door. "Come with me, and let me see it," he said; and, of course, his wish was gratified,—since it was not, and could not be, supposed that he would, at once, without the least examination of the matter, precipitate himself into the business of raising oranges. The grove in question, duly burdened with the inevitable mortgage, was in possession of an old man and his wife. The quiet little hamlet had been much excited by the arrival of the distinguished actor, currently supposed to be another Cræsus, and those old persons were

equally startled and enraptured on suddenly finding him at their door, intent on buying an estate which they were only too glad to sell. To them the advent of Mansfield, as a purchaser, seemed nothing less than a special providence, for they looked on him as another Vanderbilt or Huntington, the possessor of fabulous wealth. Their genuine awe, in the august presence, did not, however, so far dissipate a sense of thrift as to prevent them from instantly raising the price of the property to a figure much higher than had previously been named. The moment it was mentioned Mansfield, without the slightest demur, agreed to pay it. A whispered warning, that he was being imposed upon and should pause and consider, was brusquely disregarded. "The affair is settled," he said: "*I* am buying this ranch. Besides, these old people want to sell it, and they need the money. I like old people. I am always sorry for them. They need sympathy. We shall all be old, if we live long enough. Let us go and tell Beatrice." The agreement to buy an estate having been thus calmly and rationally made,—without a preliminary glance by which to ascertain anything about its condition, or even an inquiry as to how much of the land was under cultivation,—Mansfield accepted an orange, a "Mediterranean sweet,"—the only orange, as it happened, that ever

came to him from his ranch,—and, returning to my cottage, announced to Mrs. Mansfield, in the deep, booming voice he sometimes used when pleased and playful: “Bee-ah-trice, you are now the owner of an orange grove!” A day or two later, at Los Angeles, the legal obligation, unhappily, was assumed,—Mansfield paying \$1,000 and signing a contract to pay the rest, or forfeit his investment. He was earnestly, urgently, and in good time advised against this rash transaction,—for the judgment of Mrs. Mansfield, and of all his friends, was opposed to it: but he would not be prevented. The most that friendly interposition could effect was a reduction of the price stipulated, from \$15,000 to \$13,500. The ranch proved to be in a bad condition,—a considerable part of it not having been even cleared of “brush” and stones. The price charged for it was, under then existing conditions, exorbitant. The ultimate result of the business was not only Mansfield’s loss of the property and more than \$3,000 that he had paid, but a protracted, wearisome, vexatious, iniquitous litigation. The season of 1893-’94 was full of troubles for him. His losses were heavy. His health was seriously impaired. He could not make the payments that he had agreed to make. The orange grove which thus distressed him and thus slipped out of his hands has since been well culti-

vated and has become very valuable. He called it "Mansfield," and, for a time, built golden dreams upon its ownership. It is marked, to this day, by a flower-covered pyramid of stones, in front of a crazy old house,—a relic of the beginning of abortive plans for a beautiful garden. I have always regretted that he ever saw the geranium hedges, the oleanders, and the red and yellow roses of beautiful Mentone. His proceedings, on the occasion of his visit to the retreat, however, afford an illuminative, authentic glimpse of his impulsive character and heedless prodigality.

Mansfield's purchase of that orange farm, in such a haphazard way, was manifestly injudicious, yet beneath its recklessness there was a practical purpose, and one which, under favorable conditions, might have been prosperously effected. Later he disclosed that purpose to me, speaking to this effect:

"We will send to Scotland and secure, from the Dundee Company, the services of some man experienced in the manufacture of marmalade. Tons of it are eaten in this country, every year. It can be manufactured here better than in Scotland: here is the fresh fruit, and good markets are within reach, and even New York is no further from us than from them,—though the freight is higher. We will establish our factory here: we will build up a business and

gradually expand it; acquire more groves; put out lemons, olives, and figs, and, under the name of Mansfield, establish a fine paying industry. If we fail elsewhere, we have then this retreat: if we succeed here, we have a source of income to sustain us in theatrical enterprise when we wish."—In his sanguine speculative mood this dreamer omitted to consider that, if the ranch as well as the acting were to fail, he would indeed have an elephant on his hands, and one that would, in the matter of "hay for breakfast," require considerably more than one ton.

At the time of his purchase at Mentone it was not easy to restrain him from other rash ventures of the same kind. In one of his letters, after leaving California, he wrote:

"I think if an offer were made of \$1,000 cash, for ten acres, adjoining my property, toward the Santa Ana river, it would be accepted, for what they all want is *Cash!* I do not know who owns that land, but I should like to extend my property that way, for I think the land is just as good there, and I want to grow things, and not to speculate. If it can be done, a check for \$1,000 can be had from me, on receipt of the title. On this ten acres I should like to have a pond built, and olives planted."

As Mansfield did not know by whom that land was owned, and as he was absent from the scene,

it was possible to restrain his alacrity of investment in agricultural enterprise, but for a few weeks he continued to be wildly enthusiastic about his orange grove. Some of the plans that he made during the continuance of that day-dream indicate both the generosity of his disposition and his innate love of beauty. I know not with how many impetuous veterans he purposed to populate his dominions in Mentone; they were numerous; and he dwelt with evident feeling on the prospect of the comfort they would find there. Nothing came of either his business scheme or his philanthropy, and it was a blessed relief for all when finally he relinquished that property and freed himself from the harpies of legal persecution.

In this year, 1893, died that great actor and greater man, Edwin Booth, one of the noblest and gentlest human beings that ever I have known. More and more, as the years have passed and as I have studied the men, the actors and the acting made known in their passage, my conviction has been deepened of his greatness in the dramatic art and of the beauty of his character, the dignity of his life, and the sweet influence that he exercised, and left. Mansfield, leaving California and proceeding on his tour, was apprised of this bereavement, and was moved thus to mention it.

Butte, Montana,

June, 13, 1893.

My Dear Winter:—

I sympathize with you greatly, in the loss of your friend—but you should not say he is *the last*. What I—I—I, am I—nothing? Do you bite your thumb at *me*? There is much drivel being written about *the last actor*. If there is demand there will be supply. For my part, let me cultivate oranges and not opinions.

You should have stayed with us on the car—it's your own fault you didn't. We are here in snow and ice—it's awful. I'm so cold I can barely write. (Whew! "barely," how that word makes me shiver—I'm sorry I used it.) Yes, the plain, the mountains—were all covered with snow, this morning.

It's a d——, dreary—desolate—dirty place. All furnaces and factories and mines, mines, mines—and dirty Indians and smutty-faced miners, and the greed of gold in every eye. Crowded house last night—but I do not know what they thought of *Brummell*—I fancy they opinioned he was a d—— fool!

I enclose a few penny and shilling curses, for you to distribute among your friends, and I desire finally to say that, if you will have the decency to join us, on June 24, in Colorado Springs, I will show you the finest sight on God's earth—to wit "The Garden of the Gods," which there is nothing more sublime in the way of spectacle: and we will then carry you East with us, *nolens volens*. With more curses,

Yours faithfully ever,

RICHARD.

his seal!

The most painful chapter in the history of Mansfield's professional career began with his return to the Atlantic coast and his re-entrance in New York in the autumn of 1893. He was bitterly dis-

satisfied with the circumstances of his fortune; he considered himself the victim of reprehensible public neglect; and he had become greatly incensed against foreign actors, and especially against Henry Irving, whom he now determined professionally to oppose, by producing “The Merchant of Venice” and acting *Shylock*, and, immediately afterward, producing “Twelfth Night,” and acting *Malvolio*. It was, of course, right that he should choose those parts, or any other available part, irrespective of the achievements of other actors. With “Twelfth Night” he might have prospered: as *Malvolio*, that greatly conceived, intricately wrought, and marvellously sustained and expressed personification of self-love, he would have given a great performance. On the other hand, it was unwise to choose *Shylock*, at that critical time, when the memory of Edwin Booth’s potential and thrilling personation of the part still lingered, and when Irving’s wonderful embodiment of it possessed a prodigious popularity and was actually in public view. This point is equally beside consideration of either Mansfield’s aptitude for the character or his rank as an actor: it is one of *management*,—which he liked to call “generalship,” and in which, contrary to his belief, he was often at fault. However excellent and deserving as an actor he may then

have been, public opinion had not accepted him as another Booth, and it had accepted Irving's performance of *Shylock* as representative and incomparable. The time, furthermore, was unpropitious for any costly enterprise, the business of the whole country having been prostrated by "panic." It was known, for example, and Mansfield knew it by personal experience, that "people, and *rich* people, were paying for theatre tickets with I. O. U.'s." Only a few months earlier he had explicitly declared his aversion to the making of a revival of Shakespeare, and risking his savings in one venture, saying, "If I am to give out my money, I would rather bestow it where it will accomplish some lasting benefit." That preference was wise, for the situation had become perilous, and in theatrical circles, all over the land, there was an anxious sense of insecurity. The theatre-going public had but little money to spend on "amusements," and, naturally, that money was expended for the pleasure of seeing such exhibitions as were then the most prominent and celebrated. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, with elaborate and beautiful productions of diversified and interesting plays, and with an exceptionally fine dramatic company, were traversing the country, and, as it happened, the tide of popular interest was flowing more strongly and steadily in their favor than

in that of any of their competitors. Ellen Terry's acting,—especially her superb personation of *Portia*, much the best that has been seen in our time,—would, in itself, have been almost sufficient to have caused that effect. A more inauspicious moment, surely, could not have been selected for the making of a costly Shakespearean revival and for the presentment of a new *Shylock*,—a character possessing no intrinsic charm, but, when truthfully embodied, being barbarous and repellent, the victorious theatrical employment of which has always been found to depend either upon colossal power or marvellous intellectual subtlety in the actor of it, or upon superlatively fine acting in the auxiliar parts, or upon splendor of environment, or upon all these combined. Yet that was the moment and that was the character selected by Mansfield, for a venture, which, even under favorable circumstances, might have seemed of dubious expediency. On October 9, 1893, he began an engagement in New York, at a little theatre called Herrmann's, in the second story of a building at the southwest corner of Broadway and Twenty-ninth Street,—a theatre well adapted for the exhibition of a conjuror's tricks, for which it was intended, but absolutely unsuitable for the presentment of a Shakespearean play,—and there, after acting, in rapid succession, *Brummell*, *Chevrial*,

Dimmesdale, and *Jekyll* and *Hyde*, he produced "The Merchant of Venice," October 23, and for the first time performed *Shylock*. By what means he succeeded in placing his elaborate production upon that diminutive stage it was difficult to understand. At a later time, when Herrmann's Theatre had become the Princess Theatre, and the stage had been rebuilt and enlarged, the proscenium opening was only twenty-five feet wide, the distance between the curtain-line and the back wall was only twenty-three feet, and a "forty-foot drop" could not be used on the stage. Mansfield's scenic display, accordingly, was mutilated. His performance of the Jew, which is described and commemorated elsewhere in this memoir, while, necessarily, it lacked clarity and completeness, was remarkable for sustained vigor and for points of exceptional merit. The presentment, however, as a whole, was inadequate, and it did not arouse the ardent enthusiasm that he had expected it to inspire. My professional duty as a dramatic reviewer was minutely, thoughtfully, and zealously fulfilled, and Mansfield's acting of *Shylock* received at my hands a liberal measure of sympathetic recognition. He thought otherwise; he decided that he had been treated with malicious injustice; "deserted"; "neglected"; "persecuted"; "damned!" His letters to me became



Photograph by Window and Grove, London

ELLEN TERRY AS *PORTIA*

insufferable, and, at last, I felt constrained to request him not to write to me again. "A friend should bear a friend's infirmities," but there are times when the most inveterate patience tires. Mansfield had been driven into a sort of frenzy, by failures, disappointments, care, and incipient sickness. The following is a mild specimen of his epistolary productions at that time, addressed to me:

Damn your criticisms! *No* man can keep me back for long! You can injure my pocket, and you certainly have—on occasions! I had a deuce of a time getting our only patrons, the Jews, to come and see "The Merchant," because *you* made me out a fiend and a vulture. \$8,000 more of my hard-earned dollars gone; and you impractical Devil—what do I—am I—can I, live on? Air? Do you think I am eternally to sweat and labor for no earthly return?

I have been harassed and worried and hounded, beyond all endurance. It seems I must even suffer in silence! It seems that I must never look forward to anything but a life of work!

Irving has been fêting the critics here (in Chicago) and I have again found the trail of the serpent and its slime! I have even an accurate and verbatim report of his conversation with them,—one of his not least amazing declarations being that he is to present "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," in London. That being the play in which I should make my re-entrée there, his Snake-ship will, snake-like, forestall me!

In other letters he vented his resentment of fancied injuries, in language still more intemperate,

not to say vituperative. He had not, in fact, been represented as either "a fiend" or "a vulture," in his performance of *Shylock*. On the contrary, his ideal of the part, in so far as it could be clearly discerned, had been designated as correct, and portions of his expression of it had been highly extolled,—as they deserved to be. It had not, however, been stated that he made Shakespeare's Jew a noble, righteous, virtuous, admirable, sympathetic person, whom the Hebrew inhabitants of the country should eagerly hasten to behold; and eventually I learned that the omission of some such testimony as that was his principal "grievance." If he had so represented *Shylock* his performance would have deserved, and would have received, explicit condemnation, for the Jew of "The Merchant of Venice" is a specious, treacherous, malignant, bloody-minded person, and all theories that conceive of him as anything else are chimerical,—being unwarranted by the text of the play. At one time, long ago, I was misled, in the study of that subject, by the ingenious commentaries of Ludwig Borné and Victor Hugo, and by various old records, such as those which glowingly commemorate the acting, in *Shylock*, of such chieftains as Edmund Kean and James William Wallack. Shakespeare's text is the only true guide, and it leads, inevitably, to a different and very

clear conclusion. It is, unquestionably, true that an actor who would evoke public sympathy with *Shylock* must emphasize a human side of the character, and that is what Mansfield, probably, intended to do, and thought that he had done. What he actually did, however, was to present *Shylock*, substantially, in the manner that is prescribed by the Jew's words and deeds, and by the words and deeds of persons who are associated with him,—blurring his performance, from time to time, by an incongruous effort to arouse compassion.

An objectionable feature of Mansfield's assumption of *Shylock*, as first displayed, was *realism* of treatment: at the words, for example, with which the Jew greets *Antonio*, “Your worship was the last man in our mouths,” he expressed *Shylock's* “loathing” for the Merchant by literally spitting upon the stage,—a kind of “business” of which he then approved, but in the customary use of which he, happily, did not persist. He was versatile and ingenious in his artistic method, from the first, but it was not until he had matured his art, by years of practical experience, that he discarded,—in so far as he ever did discard,—the expedients of realism. In giving his first performance of “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” for example,—when that play was produced in Boston (1887),—at the moment,

in the first act, when *Hyde* leaps upon *Sir Danvers Carew*, hurls him to the floor, and strangles him, Mansfield lost control of himself and so maltreated the representative of *Sir Danvers*, the late Mr. Boyd Putnam (1865-1908), that the injured victim of realism fainted, repeatedly, and was with difficulty recovered. At another point in the same play, when *Hyde* interrogates the hag, *Rebecca Moore*, as to the personal appearance of a man who has called to see him, Mansfield suddenly turned up toward her a distorted, hideous, diabolical countenance, and, growling forth the inquiry, "Like *me?*" druled at the mouth. Such "real" expedients are not only unnecessary but unartistic. Acting is not Nature, but the imitation of Nature. "Real tears," for instance, which some players can readily produce, are not effective, unless they are perfectly controlled. When blows are given, the semblance of a blow is all that is required. Many years ago that raw, crude, boisterous actor, John Wilkes Booth, who had heard of some of the crazy actions of his father, the great Junius, and thought they should be imitated, drove an antagonist in a stage conflict completely over the footlights and into the orchestra pit. His brother, Edwin Booth, on the contrary, one of the greatest artists that have adorned the stage,—and, specifically, the greatest *tragedian*

of his time,—when he had occasion to strike a blow, seemed to deliver a stroke that was tremendous, but, in fact, when his hand touched a confederate actor the actual touch was as soft as velvet. That process illustrates *acting*. Art is free from extravagance; is the product of perfect self-control. Mansfield was slow in learning that truth, but he did learn it, and, to a large extent, his mature acting exemplified it. Indeed, a gradual progress of development, such as attends the experience of all fine actors, was especially notable in his acting. Every part that he played was polished by continuous work upon its details and in the process of repetition. His style grew more and more refined as the years passed and as experience broadened his view and chastened his taste. His ambition, furthermore, was not deadened by either disappointment, trouble, sickness, or sorrow. Had his life and health been spared a little longer he would have attempted the great characters of *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, and it is not unreasonable to believe that, in those colossal fabrics of imagination and feeling, he would have gained substantial and lasting renown.

“Damn your criticisms,” it has been noted, was his fervent ejaculation on finding that his *Shylock* had not been hailed as a heavenly Hebrew father, and, especially, had not been acclaimed as superior to

the *Shylock* of Irving. His propensity to brood upon what he considered malign influence proceeding from that foreign actor was now much intensified, and it kept him in a continual state of seething exasperation. In this he was singularly unfortunate and radically mistaken. Irving, many years older than Mansfield, had earned and gained the leadership of the English stage, and had obtained international renown, before Mansfield's star arose, and, at the time when they met, he was at the summit of a great and abundantly prosperous career. He never considered Mansfield as a rival, any more than Edwin Booth did, and he would not have tried to injure him or to thwart his progress, even if he had so considered him. Mansfield had planned to act *Richard the Third*, before resolving to go to London, and his presentment of that tragedy in the British capital,—an expensive enterprise,—was not undertaken by advice of Irving or of anybody else, but solely by his own will, and the outcome of his London season, 1888-'89, first at the Lyceum and afterward at the Globe,—the loss, that is to say, of \$167,000,—was not due to the hostile machinations of any individual or any combination of individuals, but to the simple, decisive fact, which is the cause of all theatrical disasters, that the public did not award to

his costly productions that amount of practical support which was imperatively necessary for the payment of his large expenses. When he left England, in 1889, he was in debt to Irving, and it seems to have been his conviction that his lack of sufficient public patronage had been caused by the insidious hostility of that actor. The notion was as deplorable as it was fallacious, and, eventually, it caused much unhappiness. Mansfield was impulsive, and, when excited, prone to reckless speech. There is no reason to doubt that he believed what he said, at the time he said it, when he attributed his ill-fortune to enmity on the part of Irving; but he had no reason to believe it, his talk was wild, and more than once, after his arrival home, in 1889, I besought him to restrain his words, to discard his delusion, and to make all possible haste in the settlement of the Lyceum business. That counsel he then received in kindness: "I will, and have borne in mind all you say about Irving" (so he wrote, October 25, 1889); "I will have none but the kindest feelings: the business part of it shall be attended to at once." His sensible resolution did not prevail over his fretful ill-humor. He continued to inveigh against the phantom foe of his angry fancy. His censorious words drifted to Irving's knowledge,—calumny, as usual, being carried by "the birds of

the air,"—and that actor (a loyal friend and a "good hater"), bitterly resentful of injustice, retaliated by taking legal steps for the recovery of the money that Mansfield owed to him, and also by purchase, from the London publishers, of the rights to use the story of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" on the English stage. The debt was paid. Mansfield, much as he sometimes grumbled and vaped, never intended to wrong Irving, or to wrong anybody else. The following entry, copied from the Ledger of the London Lyceum Theatre, appears in the copious, minute, interesting "Life of Henry Irving," by Austin Brereton:

£1675 left owing by Mr. Mansfield for rent.		
Also £1000 Loan.		
<hr/>		
£2675.		
1894 Recv'd loan and interest...	£1180	16 8
1896 Recv'd rent and interest,		
Less law fees.....	£1476	14 10
	<hr/>	
	£2675	11 6

The good news of the adjustment of this affair, by the removal of an irksome cause of mutual discontent, was communicated to me by Mansfield, and was recognized with these words:

I received your letter, this day, about your relations with Mr. Irving. I am very glad to hear that the money is paid and the business part of it settled. Perhaps you and he will, one day, understand each other. I hope so. I never heard *him* say an ill word of *you*. I wish that the papers had not represented you as saying hard words of him. It is a great pity that two men, whom God has blessed with such genius, and such power for the good of the stage and society, should not agree, and get on in kindness. But, in Heaven's name, never open your lips about him again, for any paper to hear!

W. W.

It was, for a time, one of Mansfield's erroneous impressions, of which he had many, that my views, not only of his acting but of the acting of other members of the stage, were fashioned and guided by friendship. A word on that subject, personal to myself, will not, perhaps, be considered inappropriate. I have been a writer about the stage for more than half-a-century. In the course of that time I have discussed the performances of hundreds of actors and have written many columns of recognition and of praise; but I have never written a line of praise that I did not believe to be deserved, and I have never written a word of commendation of any person because I was fond of that person or because that person was fond of me. I have never sought the friendship of any person, nor have I ever been influenced by it. I have had friends: most of them are dead: but their affection has been mine,—for

which I am profoundly grateful,—not because it was solicited, and not because they thought they had anything to gain by it, but because, out of their goodness and gentleness, they were pleased to bestow that blessing upon me, and thus to brighten my life. Some observers maintain that the professional critic of acting cannot write impartially about actors if he is personally acquainted with them. To me it has always seemed that accurate personal knowledge of the actor is distinctly propitious to an ample and minute appreciation of the acting. Each observer must judge for himself. It is the chief privilege of the critic to recognize, to foster, and to encourage. The necessity may, and sometimes does, arise for explicit censure, but the most salutary province of criticism is commendation,—that thoughtful, rational, kindly treatment of artistic endeavor which tends to help. During a lifetime of literary service to the Dramatic Art I have labored in accordance with that conviction,—knowing many actors,—and I am wishful to believe that I have not labored in vain. A man who occupies a position of critical responsibility to the public must, it seems to me, be signally deficient of individual character if he supposes that he cannot write the truth about acting when the actor happens to be a personal friend. I was fond of Mansfield, and

frequently I commended his acting; not because of friendship for the man, but for the simple, sufficient, imperative reason that frequently his acting was good, and sometimes it was magnificent. On the other hand I never hesitated to condemn his faults; and, although he was resentful, angry, and acrimonious, in response to censure, I retained his friendship till his death. In writing this biography, which, necessarily, involves many intimate personal recollections and impartments, I have found it impossible to avoid reference to myself, and for that I would ask the reader's indulgence. The familiar quotation from Virgil is not irrelevant: "*Quæque ipse misserrima vidi, et quorum pars magna fui.*" Whenever Mansfield merited praise,—and that was often,—he always received it, from at least one pen. When he made himself amenable to censure he did not escape from it. By some writers he was slandered and traduced. By some he was misunderstood and was treated without appreciation if not with willful injustice. His habit of indiscreet speech was known, so that sometimes even his nearest friends were constrained to trust the authenticity of splenetic remarks purporting to have been made by him. Thus, when a regular dispatch from a Western city had reported him as having indulged in contemptuous abuse and condemnation of a contem-

porary actor, with whom he was known to be at variance, the following article, written by me, was published on the editorial page of "The New York Tribune":

MR. MANSFIELD'S WRATH.

Mr. Richard Mansfield's recent colloquy with himself, at Cincinnati, was conceited, rude, ill-bred, and foolish, but there is a comic side to it. "What is Irving?" asked Mr. Mansfield; and, himself responding to his inquiry, he replied "He is no better actor than I am." This recalls one of the Ellenborough anecdotes. "Now, my lords," said Lord Westmoreland, "I asked myself a question." "Yes," said Ellenborough, unconsciously murmuring his thought, "and a damned stupid answer you'd be sure to get to it." Mr. Mansfield's answer, however, is doubtless satisfactory to himself.

Persons who have observed and studied the stage for a longer period than Mr. Mansfield has lived would answer his question in a very different manner. They would tell him that Henry Irving is a great actor—one of the greatest actors that have ever appeared, and the best stage manager of whom there is any record in the history of the English Drama. They would say, furthermore, that Mr. Irving is not only a better actor than Mr. Mansfield, but so much a better actor that no comparison between them is for a moment possible, and that nobody but Mr. Mansfield himself would think of making it. They would add that Mr. Irving, since he leased the London Lyceum Theatre, has, perhaps, done more than any man of our time to maintain a high standard in dramatic matters and to educate and advance the public taste—his sole rival in that good work being, not Richard Mansfield, but Augustin Daly. And they would take the liberty to mention that when Mr. Mansfield stigmatizes Mr. Irving as "a stage mountebank," and as "a theatrical diplomat," whose professional conduct "savors of the

actress who 'loses' her diamonds once a year," he insults the intelligence of the community and stultifies his own.

Explosions of petty spite and silly wrath on the part of Mr. Mansfield have become too frequent. He should be told, and he ought to remember, that it is equally unmanly and senseless for anybody to growl and grumble because other persons do not accept him at his own valuation of himself. The way to win admiration is to deserve it, and to go on deserving it, whether it is accorded or not. Abler men than Mr. Mansfield have gone through the world, doing their best, and deserving fortune and homage,—and have died unrecognized and unrewarded. Mr. Mansfield's rare abilities, on the contrary, have been acknowledged and applauded everywhere, and the only thing that has ever stood in his way is his inveterate propensity to carp and snarl at other persons. He cannot injure Mr. Irving. His hysterical ebullitions only injure himself. When "the boys" in a Western settlement were riding a sap-headed young clergyman out of the place on a rail, the ringleader summarized the situation with one brief but expressive remark: "We ain't agin' religion here," he said, "but we *do* hate to see a cuss spilin' it!"

Indignant denial, by Mansfield, that he had ever spoken the words attributed to him, promptly followed the publication of that article. The spirit of those words, as well as the words themselves, was exactly accordant with the spirit of words that I heard him speak, in general company, and had earnestly asked him never to utter, because alike unwarranted, undignified, and wrong. Then, as always, though, it was my earnest desire that he should be justly and kindly treated, and there-

fore, upon receipt of his denial, I wrote and published an article, of which this is the essential part:

It is an old established principle that nothing is ever settled until it is settled aright. Mr. Mansfield repudiates, in explicit terms, the language ascribed to him in the press dispatch from Cincinnati that was published in this journal, and later was made the subject of editorial comment. Mr. Mansfield declares that the interview designated in that dispatch never occurred, and that the words attributed to him were never spoken. Under those circumstances the strictures on Mr. Mansfield were not warranted.

It is just, however, to say that the Cincinnati dispatch appeared, on the face of it, to be authentic, and that belief in it was natural. Publications, signed with Mr. Mansfield's name, are in existence, expressing his disfavor toward foreign actors, and, during several years, the newspapers, in different parts of the country have, from time to time, contained accounts of speeches and conversations, wherein Mr. Mansfield has appeared as a person with a grievance. Reputation affects belief. If, for example, the language ascribed to Mr. Mansfield had been imputed to Mr. Jefferson it would have been discredited at once, as preposterous and absurd. Alleged as the utterance of Mr. Mansfield it seemed credible, because it was harmonious with antecedent publications.

Duquesne Theatre, Pittsburg, Pa.

My Dear Winter:—

I thank you, with all my heart, for the more than "amende honorable."

You are perfectly right—that I have felt sore and that to you, as an old friend, I have often unburdened myself. That is no reason why I should do so in Public. Moreover, I have grown wise in my generation.

Do you fancy I really had no cause for anger? I suffered

a loss of \$167,000—actual figures. I was not fairly treated, and Mr. Irving's last action was to buy "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," to prevent me from playing it in London. He also caused me to be attached, in a small New England town, late on a Saturday night. I have paid him every cent I owe him. I forgive him any intentional or unintentional harm he may have done me.

I have been—I was, his most devoted friend, his ardent admirer. I believed in him implicitly. I have bestowed upon him many gifts and tokens of friendship. He accepted everything coldly, and never made any return. I am hasty and quick-tempered—but I harm only myself. I would rather be so, than cold, calculating, and insincere.

Even the St. Louis speech, so much referred to recently, was an outrageous fake. I made but one speech, which was forced upon me—the audience would not have it otherwise. There was not one serious word in that speech; it was entirely comic, and accepted as such by the audience. Some cad, three days afterward, published, to our utter amazement and consternation, a series of remarks, purporting to have been uttered by me, which were a string of ridiculous lies. Upon these the New York papers commented seriously.

I have written to Irving—I ought to write to Tree. I have abused neither of these men. They are welcome to all the honor and glory and money they can acquire.

Always

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Pittsburgh, Penna.

My Dear Winter:—

I can only at this moment thank you for your generous letter. I read for the first time the press dispatch from Cincinnati. The scoundrels must have simply manufactured it, for it has not even the basis of truth which some equally dangerous but garbled reported interviews and speeches possess, and I

can't imagine how anybody could really believe that I talked like a fish-wife.

Certainly I have spoken and written to you in a mood of bitterness. You, who are a poet and must have a poet's moods, best know how the arrows of outrageous fortune torture a man's mind, and how an enfeebled constitution and a nerve-racked frame will make a fellow shriek, as hope after hope and ambition after ambition is thwarted, and fades, and dies. But I do not talk cheap trash like a common scold.

You are quite right about Jefferson—nobody would believe that he had said anything of the kind. But there is this difference—that *I* produce four or five plays a year, and have spent thousands on new and old plays, such as "Richard" and "Nero"—and that I am striving, striving, studying, and have been starving. Mr. Jefferson is a dear, lovely fellow, who likes a small company and a jog trot. Every man to his taste.

Irving is twenty years my senior. I admire him very much; I am, personally, his friend, and if he needed my friendship he could have it, and every copper I am likely to make, to back it up. *Politically* I am his opponent. He does not believe in Reciprocity. *I do*. I think it's an infernal shame that a man who has won his spurs in this country should not be esteemed a Knight in England—that it should be a practical impossibility to make a dollar over there.

I *like* all these fellows—I am still fond of Irving: but I *do* think there should be a fair, square chance all round. Basta—that's all. Let the dead bury the dead. Talking of the dead, Sol Smith Russell is here and has got "The Heir at Law" by the ears and is galvanizing the old fellow "*with songs contributed by Mr. Joseph Jefferson!*" Has Jefferson been warbling, too?

We nearly died over your review of "Mr. John A. Dreams," and "Mr. Titus A. Peep." I marked it as coming from your pen, and dispatched it at once to Bernard Shaw.

Beatrice has gone to New York. You'll find her at 104 West 80th Street. I shall be there Sunday evening. At the house

there is a high-backed chair, in which Cardinal Borgia was wont to disport himself, which now belongs to you, and in the theatre there will also be a chair which will have "W. W." beautifully embroidered upon its back.

When you write scathing editorials about me, please recollect that it is simple madness to nourish and cherish a plant, and watch it, and water it, and whiskey it, and so forth and so forth and so forth—and, just as it shows promise of blossoming, to jump upon it with both heels! Why, more than half such success as I enjoy is born of *you*, and doesn't everybody know it? Wretched man! you have brought forth a Frankenstein!!

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It is not unreasonable, certainly it is not unnatural, that the American actor following his vocation on the American stage, should be discontented, when he finds himself neglected and, at the same time, perceives that the foreign actor is extravagantly admired and lavishly rewarded. The provincialism or the snobbery which, for many years, in America, has accepted and acclaimed the acting of foreign performers,—especially those speaking French or Italian,—often for no better reason than because it is foreign, may well have been a cause of disgust and resentment to American actors of proved ability and worth. It would, however, be unjust and deplorably illiberal to oppose the advent, upon our stage, of foreign actors of authentic talent and renown, only

because they *are* foreign. Mansfield was inclined, in this matter, to apply the doctrine of Protection. On December 31, 1900, he said, in "The New York Herald":

" We have no stage in America. The American stage is the stage for *all* stages. Everybody comes here, and everybody is welcome. Herein lies the difference between New York and Paris and London and other foreign capitals. Foreign actors make a great deal of money in America. It would be difficult for an American actor to make *any* money in London, or Berlin, or Vienna, or St. Petersburg. *American stage craft is not honored abroad.* It should be. Concerning art, the American is neither patriotic nor exclusive. The foreigner is. "

That is hardly a just or an accurate view of the subject. Old civilizations, indeed, are, naturally, conservative: they know, and they instinctively remember, that certain great things in art have been thoroughly and perfectly done, and they are not readily moved to enthusiasm about newcomers: but American actors have been received with acclamation in European cities, and have been practically rewarded as well as honored there; and therefore the statement that no reciprocity of art exists between Europe and America is incorrect. Edwin Forrest prospered in Great Britain. So did James H. Hackett. Charlotte Cushman, who went to London in 1844 (with a capital of less than \$500),

was successful there. Success attended Mr. and Mrs. Harry Watkins, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, and Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence. Jefferson's "stage craft" was not only admired but liberally rewarded abroad. Indeed, his great personation of *Rip Van Winkle* was recognized at its true value in London before it was in New York. Jefferson first acted *Rip*, in Boucicault's greatly improved version of the earlier play, at the London Adelphi Theatre, September 4, 1865, when the representation was much commended; and he again acted the part in London, at the Princess's Theatre, from November 1, 1875, to April 29, 1876. John McCullough was heartily welcomed in England. Mary Anderson's career on the British stage was, in every way, one continuous triumph: "The Winter's Tale," for example (first produced by her at Nottingham, April 23, 1887), occupied the stage of the London Lyceum, without interruption, from September 10, 1887, to March 24, 1888. Lawrence Barrett, who gained fame, would also have gained money, in London, but for the death of a member of the English royal family, which caused a mourning court and deterred his peculiar audience from the theatre. Edwin Booth, who made three ventures in England, speaking about his reception on the British stage, said (June, 1881): "I was *never* more

heartily received than by the audience drawn together when I played in London. I have had a most delightful experience, socially, professionally, and in every respect, with the exception of the unfortunate illness of my wife.

My engagement with Irving was one of the most agreeable I ever played. He is one of the most delightful men I ever met; always obliging, and always kind in every possible way. ” Ada Rehan, who was introduced upon the British stage by Augustin Daly (at Toole’s Theatre, London, July 19, 1884), became as great a favorite there as even the admired Helen Faucit had been, and, as long as she continued to act, maintained an equal position with that of Ellen Terry, the leading English actress of her time. Miss Rehan was also successful in Berlin, Hamburg, and Paris, where she filled three engagements. Augustin Daly built and managed Daly’s Theatre (opened June 27, 1893) in London, and was decisively successful there; for example, “Twelfth Night,” with which he opened that house, was acted one hundred and eleven times, and in the same season “The School for Scandal” was acted more than fifty times. On the Continental stage a large acceptance of acting in the English language could hardly be expected; yet Edwin Booth was received in the cities of Germany with greater homage than had ever been shown



EDWIN BOOTH IN 1883

toward him, even by the most friendly public of his native land! At Berlin he received a silver wreath of laurel leaves inscribed:

"To Edwin Booth, the unrivalled Tragedian, in kind remembrance of his first engagement in Germany, January and February, 1883. Presented by the Directors and the ladies and gentlemen of the Residenz Theatre."

At Hamburg the actors gave him a branch of silver bay leaves,—the veteran Herr Formes making the presentation speech. At Bremen the actors expressed their admiration by giving him a silver crown of laurel. Another silver wreath was given to him at Leipsic. He was received with kindred favor in Vienna. Wherever he acted his audiences were large and were wildly enthusiastic in their applause. The German press teemed with tributes to his genius. "I have just accomplished" (so he wrote to me, January 11, 1883) "the one great object of my professional aspiration. 'Tis after one o'clock in the morning and I am very weary, but cannot go to bed without a line to you. When I am cooler I will try to give you a full account of the night's work. The actors as well as the audience were very enthusiastic, many of the former kissing my hands, and thanking me over and over again,—for what I know not, unless it was

because they recognized in me a sincere disciple of their idol, Shakespeare. ”

It is not because “American stage-craft is not honored abroad” that American actors find it difficult to earn *much* money there. *All* actors find it difficult. The same custom of lavish public expenditure on theatres that prevails in America does not prevail in Europe. Irving, the most greatly esteemed and widely followed actor of his time, on the British stage, was obliged to earn in America the money needful to maintain his vast enterprises at the Lyceum, London, and, speaking before the curtain in New York, he testified that without the generous support of the American public he could not have carried on his work. Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, a representative London actor and manager of the present day, has found it very difficult to support the great burden of his theatre. America is the best market-place in the world for the actor, —yielding far larger profits than can be obtained in Europe,—but it does not follow from this fact that “the foreigner is exclusive” as to American actors and acting. There are other forces beside churlishness and insular prejudice that affect the interchange of art between America and Europe.

Several months passed before my “Frankenstein” presented himself to my view, and when at

last he did appear his advent was accomplished in a manner not inharmonious with the character that he had playfully assumed. It was on a peaceful Sunday morning, in April. I was, by chance, alone in my somewhat sequestered abode, in Staten Island,—as solitary as *Manfred* in his tower, and bent on being quite as unsocial; for an exacting literary task engrossed my thoughts and made me impatient of interruption. There are strange beings who,—wishful to go upon the stage, or to publish verses, or to present plays, or to reform mankind,—feel that nothing can be done without a preliminary conference with some person associated with the press, and from those importunate enthusiasts rigid seclusion provides the only means of escape. It was, accordingly, my custom to keep the doors locked and to make no response to the knocking or ringing of callers. “Fast bind” is a good proverb, for others beside old *Shylock*. On that particular day I had determined not to admit anybody; whereupon, by perversity of fortune, the applicants for admission became more than usually numerous,—all, however, unheeded, passing away. At length, after a considerable period of silence, I became aware of a peremptory ringing of the bell, succeeded by emphatic blows upon the front door. Here, evidently, was a besieger acquainted

with my custom of fortification. The ringing was resumed, and it became a continuous peal, for several minutes. The thumps were renewed. Then stillness. Then more blows, this time upon a door in the western side of the building. Then, finally, a thunderous "knocking at the south entry," the sound of which reverberated through the empty house. About ten minutes later, the clamor having ceased, and the visitant, as I supposed, departed, I descended to my library, on the lower floor, in quest of a book. My arrival proved timely. As I entered the room, at one end of it, I saw that a window at the other end had been raised, and that Mansfield, blooming in fine, fashionable raiment, as was his custom, was projecting himself through the aperture, at the same time, at sight of me, exclaiming, in stentorian tones,—rich, hearty, jovial, exultant,—“So you *are* at home! I thought so! My dear Winter, how are you?” I beheld him with amazement. “Come in, Mansfield,” I said, or rather whispered—for I was almost speechless, with cold. “Come in,” he shouted: “Do I look as if I were *not* coming in? Here he is,” he continued, “this wicked old man; this old gray fox that must be dug out; who never minds his door-bell: he thought he could elude *me*: he cannot: he *must* listen to me, for hours and hours, and he cannot

even reply. He whispers: he cannot be heard. Miserable man! you *have* brought forth a Frankenstein!" He was like a happy boy, abounding in joyous mischief, and delighted with it. We sat together for the rest of the day, and all the while he discoursed to me, of his plans, his dreams, his prospects, his recent experiences, his friends and foes and fancied foes, and the vicissitudes of his fortunes. His smile was winsome, his voice cheery, his mirth exhilarant. He seemed the personification of happiness. He sang for me. He mimicked the faddists of the hour. He read aloud from the manuscript of his book of nonsense,—afterward published under the name of "Blown Away." He told anecdotes. He was at his best of geniality and droll humor. No man could be more engaging than Mansfield was, as an entertainer, and that day, as I remember it, he excelled himself. It was a rare occasion, and it marked the complete disappearance of whatever shadow of resentment might have lingered between us.

The financial adversity which attended his production of "The Merchant of Venice" disappointed and depressed him so much that he abandoned his design of producing "Twelfth Night," and he never recurred to it. A long time passed, indeed, before he could bring himself even to think of a new

venture in Shakespeare. His production of "Richard III.," which had been for four years included in his repertory, though not frequently employed, was again used in 1898, but it was not until 1901 that he once more raised the standard of the greatest of dramatists,—this time winning a brilliant victory,—with his magnificent revival of "Henry V."

The gloomy engagement at Herrmann's Theatre lasted only four weeks (October 9 to November 4, 1898), and Mansfield then made another tour, extending far and wide through the West and South. The part of *Shylock* was retained in his repertory, and from time to time it was repeated. Good fortune did not favor him, though, and his health, which gradually had been impaired by excessive exertion and incessant worry, presently failed; he broke down, and for some time he was seriously ill.

VIII.

1894 TO 1899.

IN the spring of 1894, writing to me from a city in the West, Mansfield, now improved in health, dwelt earnestly on his wish that his flurry of anger, when suffering from grip, should be forgotten. "I was never so ill in my life," he said, referring to that culmination of his troubles; "I did not act for three weeks, and ought not to have played for seven." He also expressed the purpose of visiting London, in quest of new plays, but that purpose was not accomplished,—possibly because the English censor had, meanwhile, declined to sanction the play of "Beau Brummell," so that any design he might incidentally, have entertained of acting again in the British capital was frustrated. It was not easy (at least, I have not found it so) to cherish unkind feeling. No person who knew Richard Mansfield well could long remain seriously offended with him, for, in some ways, he was like a tired child. "*Don't* be mad with me," he wrote; "I only cried out to you, and against

you, as to a father or brother who wouldn't understand."

104 West 80th Street, New York,

August 2, 1894.

My Dear Winter:—

I am only in town for a couple of days, and I should dearly like to shake you by the hand—will you come and dine and spend the evening? I am all alone, and dine at seven. If you feel like going away for a few days,—I shall start from here, on my little boat, on Sunday, and I can make you comfortable and give you a week's cruise. I think you would enjoy it: again I am entirely alone on the boat, barring the crew, and I make a point of going to nobody and seeing nobody. If you like sailing I am certain it would do you good, and the sight of the New York Yacht Club fleet,—whose cruise I intend to follow, from Glen Cove to New Haven—from New Haven to New London—from New London to Newport—will be delightful. You can sprawl on your back and gaze at the sky. What do you say?

I left Beatrice at New London, for a few days, with friends.

Yours always, with kindest regards,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

That kind invitation was necessarily declined, and, on August 29, requiring rest, I sailed for Scotland.

104 West 80th Street,

New York, September 1, 1894.

My Dear Winter:—

Your kind letter, written on board the *Britannic*, was a sorry surprise to us, for we had hoped to have seen much of you here, in our home, before we started on our annual jaunt. But if you are ill it is well indeed that you should be able to get away—above all to Bonnie Scotland. How, how I

wish we were with you! May it be for next summer! I have promised Beatrice a trip thro' all the lovely spots of England and Scotland, and perhaps some parts of Germany and Switzerland or the Tyrol. Perhaps you may be persuaded to join us?

I am as far off from the goal of my ambitions as ever—and I see no improvement. I open the new Herald Square Theatre on September 17, with a satirical comedy, of no particular weight—clever enough; containing no part for me. In fact, in the second act (there are three) until the end of it, I do not appear. My one hope is that somebody may *write* something.

If you see Irving, greet him from me, and tell him I have forsaken the errors of my youth and heartily sympathize, and am in sympathy, with him.

I am here until the 29th of October. Give my love to your wife and children, and believe me

As ever very devotedly yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

In the autumn of 1894 he appeared, September 17, at the Herald Square Theatre, New York, and, for the first time, acted *Captain Bluntschli*, in Mr. George Bernard Shaw's satirical play "Arms and the Man." No play by that author had previously been presented in America, and, although that novelty did not attract much attention, the success obtained by Mansfield, as *Bluntschli*, eventually launched Mr. Shaw upon a tide of publicity which has not yet ceased to flow. A more notable event was the representation, October 27, of a series of pictorial scenes,—a sort of theatrical panorama,—

illustrative of the life of Napoleon Bonaparte,—Mansfield personating the meteoric emperor.

Napoleon has figured in the English drama for nearly, if not quite, a century. A spectacle play, called "The Fall of Moscow," was long popular in London, at Astley's Amphitheatre and elsewhere, and Edward A. Gomersal (1788-1862) was admired for his presentation of the famous Corsican. Readers of *Bon Gaultier* will remember the ballad of "The Midnight Visit," descriptive of Lord Castlereagh's consternation on beholding Bonaparte,—supposed to have escaped from St. Helena,—and of the relief of that statesman, when the phantom vanished, and he read, in the "mystic scroll" which had been left upon his table, "*Napoleon*, for the Thousandth time, by Mister Gomersal." In recent years the conqueror has largely figured on our stage as the domestic despot in the ingenious drama of "Mme. Sans Gêne." Mansfield was always especially sympathetic with the character of Napoleon, and indeed,—however extravagant the statement may seem, at first glance,—his personality comprised some of the attributes of that character,—stalwart courage, vaulting ambition, inflexible will, resolute self-confidence, great capacity for labor, iron endurance, promptitude of decision, propensity for large schemes, and passionate taste for profusion of opulent surround-



Courtesy of Baker Art Gallery, Columbus, Ohio

MANSFIELD AS *NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE*

ings. Like Napoleon, also, he was sensitive to weird imagery and to far-off musical, melancholy sounds, and especially fond of children. The wish to act *Napoleon* had long been cherished by him. He often mentioned it to me. In 1893 he wrote that he had planned certain scenes which he thought could be acted, but which, in representation, would need to be conjoined by an interlude of prose narrative, for recitation,—somewhat after the model of the Greek Chorus; and he asked me to write that interlude—a dubious expedient for modern theatrical use, which I declined to furnish. He also, as already mentioned, proposed the subject to Augustin Daly, but without, at that time, practically interesting that manager. Daly produced a version of “Mme. Sans Gêne” January 3, 1899, at his theatre in New York, Ada Rehan acting *Catherine*, afterward *Duchess of Dantzig*, and George Clarke (1840?-1906) appearing as the Emperor. The piece about Napoleon that Mansfield ultimately obtained and presented was a cluster of episodes, representative more than dramatic, contributory to a pictorial outline of the Emperor’s life, and it enabled him, at least, to gratify himself by assuming,—as he did, with a keen perception of the man and with striking effect,—several aspects of Napoleon, mental no less than physical. The public response to his exhibition

of that great historic person was not considerable. His acting, indeed, was admired: his play, "a thing of shreds and patches," was rightly considered tedious. The first presentation of "Napoleon Bonaparte" occurred on the last night of his New York engagement. On October 29 he began another tour of the country, and this, happily, was remunerative,—although his gains were lessened by his ill-judged persistence in presenting, from time to time, both "Napoleon Bonaparte" and "Arms and the Man."

He was now to undergo another painful experience of labor wasted, ambition thwarted and hope bereaved. Early in 1895 a serious illness befell that clever, genial, winning Irish comedian, Edward Harrigan, and he presently felt constrained to relinquish his theatre, which had been very prosperous, but which had greatly declined in public favor. Mansfield, who for several years had entertained the project of managing a theatre in New York, heard of the opportunity thus opened, and immediately resolved to take advantage of it. On March 7, writing to his devoted friend and wise, conscientious, faithful legal adviser, A. W. Gleason, Esq., he said:

"It is *imperative* that I should become the lessee—if not the proprietor—of that theatre. It is just the place for me.

I can run it very inexpensively, and I can make it a simple and dignified temple of art. We rarely do less than \$5,000 per week. I will either buy or lease the theatre, at a fair price; we always pay our rent—and if we don't they can kick us out! I *must* have it, and it must be ready by Easter Monday, April 15.

Mansfield finally obtained a lease of Harrigan's Theatre (in West Thirty-fifth Street), refitted it, at large expense, called it The Garrick Theatre,—by which name it is still known (1910),—and straightway beguiled himself with rosy dreams of achievement and prosperity. "I shall work like a beaver," he wrote to me, March 17, 1895; "I shall endeavor to do my duty! I shall try to conciliate all; I shall be truly glad of your advice." His spirit was intrepid, and no friend could fail to sympathize with him and encourage him,—especially since he had already irrevocably committed himself to the undertaking; but the conditions under which he embarked in that new enterprise were, to the last degree, unpropitious. Nothing, indeed, was favorable to it, aside from his genius, indomitable courage, and high reputation. The season of 1894-'95 had been very laborious for him, following his loss and disappointment in the production of "The Merchant of Venice." He was not in robust health. His company was not very strong. The theatre that

he had chosen was situated aside from the main theatrical thoroughfare of the city, and it was associated in the public mind with Harrigan's Irish-German-Negro farces,—good entertainments of their kind, but not such as had invested the house with a high character, commending it to the favor of the educated community. He had determined to begin, not at the opening, but at the close, of the regular dramatic season, and to begin with a play which did not possess either intrinsic importance or the allure-ment of novelty. That play was "Arms and the Man," at its best a dilution of "Used Up," garnished with satirical additions, and Mansfield had already acted the chief part in it, *Captain Bluntschli*, at the Herald Square Theatre, where although his acting had been much admired, as it richly deserved to be, the play had proved practically a failure. It chanced, also, that summer resorts, called "roof-gardens," had grown in number and likewise in favor, establishing a formidable competition, at that season of the year. Mansfield's active repertory, indeed, was a good one,—comprising "A Parisian Romance," "Prince Karl," "Beau Brummell," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The Scarlet Letter," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Napoleon,"—and it provided him with some parts in which he could put forth his powers with splendid effect: but for a

summer season in New York it lacked novelty where it did not lack lightness and mirth.

In the general state of dramatic affairs, furthermore, there was much to obstruct any effort which, under existing local conditions, he might be able to make. During the period extending from the autumn of 1893 to the spring of 1896 Mansfield was, from season to season, under the necessity of contending with a professional opposition and rivalry of extraordinary force,—a host, indeed, scarcely less potent than that marshalled against him at the time of his production of "Richard III." Augustin Daly was managing a superb company, with Ada Rehan at the head of it, and, with a repertory containing "Twelfth Night," "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "The School for Scandal," "The Critic," "Heart of Ruby," and various rollicking farces. Edward S. Willard, associated with specially able auxiliar players, was acting in "The Middleman" and "Judah," two of the best plays of that accomplished dramatist, Henry Arthur Jones. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, with the formidable Lyceum corps, were pervading the country, in a marvellous repertory, which included "Becket," "Charles I.," "Olivia," "Much Ado About Nothing," "King Arthur," "The Merchant of Venice," "Macbeth," "The Bells,"

"Nance Oldfield," "Louis XI.," "The Lyons Mail," "Waterloo," and "Don Quixote." Helen Modjeska was the cynosure of many eyes, in her noble and touching embodiment of "Mary Stuart." The eminent French actor, Jean Mounet-Sully, was conspicuous in "Hernani," "Edipus Rex," "Ruy Blas," "Hamlet," and "The Cid." Mme. Réjane was delighting all beholders by her sparkling performance of *Mme. Sans Gêne* and by her piquant coquetry in "Divorçons" and "Ma Cousine." Joseph Jefferson was visible, in the affluence of his perennial popularity, acting *Rip Van Winkle*, *Acres*, and *Caleb Plummer*, and diffusing the charm of his exquisite art, of which the public never grew weary. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal could be seen in "The Ironmaster," "A White Lie," "A Scrap of Paper," and other plays, and to see them was a perfect pleasure. Rose Coghlan, in her prime, was acting brilliantly, in "Diplomacy" and "Forget Me Not." Wilson Barrett had gained an American no less than an English following, in "The Manxman," "Virginius," "Othello," and "The Silver King." Herbert Beerbohm-Tree was performing, in "The Red Lamp," "Gringoire," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "Hamlet," and "Captain Swift"; and that superb artist, John Hare, as *Goldfinch*, in "A Pair of Spectacles," was adorning the stage and brightening life

for all who saw him. Those citations only barely indicate the strength and variety of theatrical attraction, on the American stage, by which that period was marked,—an embattled array which Mansfield was obliged to meet, and which, with supreme self-confidence and undaunted spirit, he bravely set himself to encounter.

The plans that he had formed and the hopes by which he was buoyed, in entering upon the management of his theatre, are denoted in letters that follow,—sad and forlorn in effect now, remembering that nothing came of all his dreams and earnest labors but disappointment and sorrow:

Pittsburgh, Pa., Private Car 3977.

March 22, 1895.

My Dear Winter:—

Your letter, your Memoranda received. How can I thank you? I will bear it all well in mind, and it will be invaluable to me—if,—if—I can only manage to be so good and wise!?

I cannot call the theatre "Mansfield's." My instincts are all against it. Maybe the shade of Garrick has something to do with it. You see, there is Abbey's, and Miner's, and Hoyt's, and there was Harrigan's, and there is Palmer's. Garrick did just the sort of thing I should like to be able to do; Tragedy and Comedy, and even a song or so.

I want to call it "The Garrick" because it's as good a name as any other: "Mansfield's" would be beastly, and when I went out they'd change it, of course, and call it Jones's or Sniggins's. Moreover, if it turns out a failure—which may

God prevent!—I don't want *Mansfield* to suffer any more than I can help. Garrick is still a name to conjure by—and if he *was* English, what's the odds? A great actor is for all the world—not for one little spot—eh?

As soon as the place is fumigated, cleaned (a theatre by any other name would smell as sweet!) painted, recarpeted, and seated (by which I mean new chairs) you and I will sit down in it and talk it all over.

The company *shall* be the finest in the world: it will take a little time to accomplish that. I have engaged a woman, by name Janet Achurch—she is now on her way here. My brother Felix, who comes over to assist me, is bringing her with him. Felix is my elder brother—a highly educated man of good manners, accomplished and tactful. I am sorry to say he is not very strong physically, and he wears a glass in one eye—but this latter may prove an attraction!

I have seen Janet act, and I fancy that, after Ellen Terry—perhaps a long way after—she is, by far, the cleverest actress in London. Any leaning she may have toward Ibsen and cult I will straighten swiftly.

I am in grave doubt as to whether I had best open the theatre with a week or so of repertory, and gather in thus all classes of people (for, with certain plays, such as "Brummell," "Jekyll and Hyde," etc., we are sure of full houses) or whether it would be best to commence with a new play, and a possible—nay, likely, failure? I could commence with "Brummell," "A Parisian Romance," "Prince Karl," "The Scarlet Letter," "Arms and the Man," "Napoleon," and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which is my repertory in Harlem this coming week, March 25.

If I open with a new play it would, probably, be "Candida," by Bernard Shaw, if the play, on arrival here (I shall see it on Monday), proves to be clean—if not, with "The Errant King," by Charles Leonard Moore, a Philadelphian. The story is clean and pretty—a romantic King (modern) who wanders away—turns actor—falls in love with a beautiful girl,

an actress; the language is good, and all is sweet and clean and pretty, and not lacking in humor.

I also have "Galeotto," much spoken of in Europe, where its success is very great. I should call it "Public Opinion." The story is also clean. Here, you see, we have three new plays. I have also "The Philanderer," by Bernard Shaw. It is an extraordinary thing. It turns Ibsen inside out, and the spectacle, as a result, is not a pleasant or agreeable one.

All your wise counsels I will endeavor to follow and to impress upon my people.

I fear Mrs. John Wood could not be engaged, under an enormous salary,—probably \$400 or \$500 a week. Would she be worth that? And could we find parts for her?

Most of the other people you name would be gravely insulted if I offered them engagements in my company—not one of them that does not think himself or herself a star of the first magnitude, and certainly much greater than your poor R. M.

You are not going to retire to private life for the next hundred years, and it is no use your talking about it.

When, *when*, WHEN, shall I see you? I cannot tell you how greatly I feel your goodness in sending me all these golden words.

As ever your

RICHARD.

It had been a pleasure to propose for his consideration various measures that seemed propitious to his success, and in proposing them I said:

I have set down, as well as an aching head will let me, a few impressions as to your conduct of your new theatre. They are offered in response to your request, and merely as suggestive, and in no way presuming to intrude or advise. If I am here, I shall do whatever I can to help you. Everything

will be done for you that intellectual sympathy can dictate, in any case, for every intellectual man in this community wishes you to succeed.

W. W.

Normandie Hotel, Washington, D. C.,

April 10, 1895.

My Dear Winter:—

Your good letter received. Your suggestion with regard to Shakespeare's birthday is a capital one—the idea had not occurred to me and I should like to realize it; but all our costumes and scenery for "The Merchant" were burnt, in the store-house fire. I shall, however, set about it at once, and see what may be accomplished.

I have discarded play after play, and I am in despair. I cannot present—I cannot act, the sickening rot the playwright of to-day turns out. Shaw's "Candida" was sweet and clean—but he's evidently got a religious turn—an awakening to Christianity; and it's just two and one-half hours of preaching, and I fear the people don't want that. Also, there is no part for me but a sickly youth, a poet, who falls in love with *Candida*—who is a young lady of thirty-five and the wife of an honest clergyman, who is a socialist! There is no change of scene in three acts, and no action beyond moving from a chair to a sofa and *vice versa*. O, ye Gods and little fishes! I am now for "The Peruvians" ("The King of Peru"), which I think will be the right thing. Light—bright—simple—honest; a good bill for this time of the year.

I have arranged with Mr. Watt—who came over on purpose—for the right to have dramatized and to use all Stanley Weyman's works—"A Gentleman of France," "Under the Red Robe," etc., and Mr. Watt is also arranging for me with all the other important authors for whom he is agent. This is strictly *entre-nous*—it would not be wise to put Frohman on the scent. I simply want to let you know that I disregard none of your advice.

The Garrick Theatre—as a theatre—will be absolutely *charming*; I know of nothing prettier or more tasteful in New York City. I would, however, rather keep it closed than open badly, i.e., with the wrong sort of thing. In time I can train a Company to something like artistic excellence; and in time I can produce play after play; and I can, in time, find good plays.

It is possible that I may prove—please God, I may—an incentive to good men to write for the stage. One thing is certain—I will do absolutely nothing at the Garrick Theatre that a young girl may not venture to see, and I shall try to cater to young people principally. I shall try to avoid all morbid, etc., etc., etc., subjects: you can fill in these words, for you know just what I mean. I shall try to bring things back to a healthy, virile tone—to make life brighter and better, and give honor and courage a fresh start. I'm for a lance, with a bow of my lady's ribbon!

I don't like to talk of all my plans and all my hopes—my boat, with youth at the helm and hope in the bow, may come a ship-wreck—still, I shan't be disgraced for trying. I shall commence very quietly and modestly. I am in no hurry to open—we've all the year before us; perhaps ten years.

The whole scheme of decoration in the house is very simple. The character is Italian Renaissance—the scheme of color is a study in reds; everything is red, and the lights will cast a pleasant, rosy sheen over everybody and everything. The wood panelling is black oak. From the foyer a staircase leads below to the Ladies' Dressing Room and a Pompeian room, which is also devoted to them, and in which a fountain will make a soothing plashing of water. Here M. Maillard, the celebrated confectioner, will provide a cup of tea or coffee, or an ice. Women who come to the theatre from a distance suffer often from lack of refreshment, and as I have already said, this theatre of mine is to be for youth and beauty and comfort and courtesy. A lady may travel from Orange or Staten Island, and spend a comfortable hour, before the play, in the theatre.

There will be no magnificent ushers—a dozen bright boys in buttons will show you to your seat and obey your nod. If they do not behave—they are paid to take a kick. The functionary in the box-office will smile and say "If you please," like *Sir Joseph Porter*.

There will be no brass in the orchestra—no drum. Occasionally, Miss Marguerite Hall, or somebody else with a beautiful voice and an admirable method, will sing for us between the acts of the play, some old ballad that we all know and love to hear.

The Theatre will not be a cold, musty, dusty, dismal place that smells of gas and ill-conditioned drains, but a pleasant place where men and women may turn in and rest, and go away brightened, furbished, and refreshed.

Ever yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Mansfield's association with the Garrick Theatre extended over a period of about eight months. He opened that house on April 23, acting *Captain Bluntschli*, and, personally, he was cordially welcomed. Quick changes of bill ensued. An insignificant drama called "The King of Peru" was produced on May 7 and withdrawn on May 12. A revival of "Prince Karl" was made, and that was supplemented with other selections from Mansfield's old repertory. On June 1 he closed his first engagement, and on June 3 he presented a burlesque, entitled "Thrilby,"—a verbal and musical skit at Du Maurier's fanciful story of "Trilby," at that time a subject of considerable public interest,—in



Photograph by Pach Bros.

RICHARD MANSFIELD IN 1895

the representation of which, of course, he did not participate. The performance of that burlesque was, in various ways, meritorious, but the community was indifferent to it, and after a losing career of six weeks it was laid aside, July 13, and the theatre was closed. Mansfield's health had, all the while, been failing, and he now completely broke down. He was attacked by typhoid fever and for several weeks it seemed likely that the attack would prove fatal. Once, indeed, rumor signified that he was dying. He rallied, however, to the great relief of his friends, and in the autumn he went to Lakewood.

At the time of his opening of the Garrick Theatre Mansfield had seriously entertained the singular, inexplicable fancy that a social faction had arisen, in New York, to oppose and injure him. He did not name the members of it, nor did he specifically designate its character or its method of proceeding. That it was in existence and would be maliciously operative he felt assured, and he resolved upon such measures for its defeat as he believed would be decisive. Before presenting any play, in the course of his business, he would give "three public Dress Rehearsals" of it, to which admission could be bought, and those representations, necessarily imperfect, should be followed by the first regular performance. By that means the faction was to be discom-

fited; and he seems also to have believed that the newspaper press,—which has been known to forecast and even to anticipate “news,” rather than wait a few hours for the fact,—would wait three or four days before publishing any comment on his proceedings. His plan, of which no friend could approve, was set forth in these words:

104 West 80th Street, New York,
May, 1895.

My Dear Winter:—

I'm sorry you don't like the idea of the Public Dress Rehearsals. It is, at least, nothing new, and I intend to make this arrangement always. First nights are hideous—especially in this town, where a certain class of persons have monopolized the theatre upon these occasions, and not to the advantage of Art.

These people are *not* friendly to me—it is a *faction*. This move of mine, if it does not destroy the enemy,—at least cuts their army into three parts, and leaves each part uncertain where to meet me. But this is not so important as the fact that these creatures have made a first night a terror to the actor: it was always bad enough, but these ghouls have multiplied its horrors.

Many managers have, recently, in part overcome the difficulty by presenting the play out of town in the first instance. This method is not expedient for me. My dress rehearsals,—a plan which I shall, now, always follow—will take away a great deal of our nervousness, and will make a first night virtually the third performance of the play; and we shall have discovered mistakes in author, in delivery of lines, in *mise-en-scène*, etc., which can be corrected. It also affords the reviewer an opportunity, if he wishes to become thoroughly

"DRESS REHEARSALS" 237

acquainted with the work. When applied to really important productions it will be generally appreciated and largely followed.

I have to study next Sunday, and get a few words into my head, otherwise I had intended coming over. I called on Jefferson, at the Fifth Avenue: he cannot play at our house. He has a contract with Palmer, at the Garden Theatre. He is coming to "Prince Karl" this evening.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The performances of "The King of Peru," given, in pursuance of his futile plan, as "Dress Rehearsals," were not, in any essential particular, different from customary performances, and he did not again resort to that abortive expedient for attracting public attention. In calling on Jefferson he had followed a suggestion which I had ventured to make, that it would prove advantageous for him to persuade the famous comedian to act at the Garrick, in the autumn, presenting "The Rivals." The prodigious popularity of Jefferson might have operated to avert disaster, and so might have saved the fortunes of the house for the young manager to whom the enterprise was so important and so dear. The condition and feeling of the actor, under the strain of misfortune and sickness, were indicated in a letter that he wrote, after leaving town:

Lakewood, New Jersey,

October 27, 1895.

I am at present at Lakewood Asylum—where I think William Winter should join me. I am dwelling in a cottage, alone. William will only have to write one exhaustive review this week, that of the new play “Macbeth,” which is to be presented at Abbey’s Theatre, and then, in order to avoid all disagreeable comment, he can come down here.

A slip from “———” was sent me recently—cut out carefully and marked with a red and blue pencil, referring to William’s (not William Shakespeare’s but W. W.’s) annual pilgrimage to the tombstones and graveyards of merry old England; but as there was an even more unpleasant reference to *me* upon the same page, I failed to be amused: if there had been nothing disagreeable said about *me* I should, no doubt, have been hugely entertained.

Beyond these few brief facts I know nothing—which is the plainest and truest statement I have ever made! I have been in a bed-room so long that my ideas have narrowed down considerably, and since then I have crawled about with a stick, and an ardent desire to beat somebody, for something or other that somebody must have done to bring about such a condition of affairs. You don’t suppose, do you, that a fellow, just as he is baring his arms and straightening his legs for the fight, can be knocked over, and stay knocked over for ten weeks, unless somebody hit him—do you? Do you believe that evil wishes hurt people?

If William will come here, and stay here awhile, in this sacred spot, he will find an amiable and pacific idiot, brooding over the Past—instead of a rampageous and belligerent *ass*, braying defiance at the world. Let him come, and let him see! The little cottage is delightful; the walks through the oaks and pine refreshing. I have not been recognized here by a mortal being—neither will he! Let him come? I retire at nine. I

rise at seven. If you take the 1.40 train, you arrive here about 4.30.

Yours always truly,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

By the way, W. W. might bring Henry Irving down here with him, to spend Sunday. I promise to be very agreeable;—also Miss Terry and Mr. B. Stoker.

As soon as he had measurably recovered from distressing and dangerous illness he resumed his professional labor, appearing, November 25, 1895, at the Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia, as *Brummell*, and giving, in the course of one week, several selections from his repertory. Meanwhile he had arranged for the re-opening of the Garrick Theatre, and that house was occupied from September 2 till October 28 by Edmund Milton Holland, Joseph Holland, and a company, under Mansfield's management, performing in "The Man with a Past" and "A Social Highwayman." On December 3 Mansfield reappeared at the Garrick, acting, for the first time, the part of *Rodion*, in a drama derived, indirectly, from a Russian novel called "Crime and Punishment." His acting, in one scene of that play, was remarkable for its afflictive exhibition of a state of mental torture,—*Rodion*, who has committed a murder, being shown as repeating, in delirium, the commission of that crime, and exhibiting the tremor and misery of his terror and

remorse. The scene of the enacted murder was recognized as a rough variant of the Dream Scene in the well-known play of "The Bells," and Mansfield's acting in it did not suffice to mitigate the repulsiveness of literal horror inherent in a shocking story prosily told. The play was a failure, as it deserved to be, and as such nightmares invariably are. The adverse result was attributed by the actor, not to its obvious cause,—the dreary, obnoxious, repellent character of the subject and the drama,—but to the hostility of those inveterate sinners, "the critics"; and, brooding upon that mistaken notion of injustice, he became much embittered. In a magazine article that he published, several years afterward, his views and feelings relative to this melancholy subject were thus made known:

" The saddest spot in the sad life of the actor is to be forgotten. Every character he creates is a child he bears. There is labor and there is pain. He has bestowed upon it his love and incessant thought, and, sleeping and waking, it is with him as with a mother. When it is born it is born like the children of the King,—in public. Sometimes, when the people have acclaimed it, *those whose business it is to sit in judgment on the child condemn it on first sight*, and it is buried in its little coffin, and only its mother weeps over it. Poor, wretched, fever-wrought *Rodion* stands before me. After the scene of delirium, in which *Rodion* kills his imagined victim, I broke down. The curtain had fallen; the audience sat perfectly still; there was not a breath of applause. I had



Photograph by Hall, New York

E. M. HOLLAND

failed. I was carried to my room. Then there came to me the thunder of approval. It woke me—it revived me. I went before the curtain, again and again. My child had triumphed! All my troubles, my sickness, my losses, were forgotten. *But there is no mercy in these matters. The next day my child was killed.* The next night he was dead of neglect, and there was no one at his funeral. ”

The pathos of that lament is somewhat vitiated by remembrance of the fact that the newspaper notices of Mansfield's performance of *Rodion* were, in general, favorable. The “child” languished, and ultimately expired, because the public was not interested by it, and the public was not interested by it because it was not interesting. It may not be amiss to mention that twelve years later, in the season of 1907-'08, a drama on the same subject, called “The Fool Hath Said—There Is No God,” by Lawrence Irving, was presented by Edward H. Sothern, who acted the same part—with the same result, public avoidance and financial loss. Yet Mr. Sothern's impersonation of *Rodion*, the homicidal fanatic,—considered as to its technical merit,—was an exceptionally fine piece of acting; a minute study of morbid mentality, clear, consistent, and deftly finished. The character of *Rodion* is an image of disease and the play is a horror. Mansfield, in choosing to act that part, undoubt-

edly reasoned that since *Mathias*, in "The Bells," had been made effective, *Rodion*, in "Crime and Punishment," could likewise be made effective. Both are murderers. Both suffer remorse. Both rehearse the action of a murder. But there is a radical difference in the story, in the investiture, in the conduct of the plot, in the treatment of the details, and, above all, in the quality and fibre of the character of the murderer; and for that radical difference no allowance was made.

Mansfield gave his last performance at the Garrick Theatre on December 14, 1895, relinquishing the lease of that house to Mr. Charles Frohman, and once more resorting to "the hard, hard road." From that time, till the time of his peculiar good fortune with Rostand's drama of "Cyrano de Bergerac,"—a welcome prosperity, which came to him in October, 1898,—his professional experience was, comparatively, uneventful, being only that of monotonous and mostly thankless labor. His quest of fresh subjects for stage treatment meanwhile did not cease. He thought of acting *Frederick the Great* and also, if he could obtain a novel drama on the subject, *Henry the Eighth*. In the autumn of 1896, he produced, in Chicago, a new play, called "Castle Sombras," by Mr. Greenough Smith. In

the autumn of 1897 he brought out, in Albany, "The Devil's Disciple," by Mr. G. B. Shaw. In the spring of 1898 he presented, in Boston, "The First Violin." In "Castle Sombras" he personated an austere nobleman, grim and gloomy, of the stormy, picturesque period of Charles I.,—by name *Sir John Sombras*, and by nature misanthropical, though philosophic and magnanimous in mind. That was a failure. Mr. Shaw's play afforded to him the part of *Dick Dudgeon*, a humorous, reckless youth, the terror of a sober New England community. The play of "The First Violin," based on the novel of that name by Jessie Fothergill, enabled him, as *Eugene Courvoisier*, to set forth a romantic ideal of manliness, fortitude, and noble self-sacrifice, in a winning image of gentle personality. The most popular of those three new plays was "The Devil's Disciple," which, when introduced on the New York stage, in October, 1897, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, had a run of sixty-four consecutive performances. He again ventured, several times, with "Richard III." in the course of this period, and his venture,—undertaken with gloomy foreboding,—was, to his surprise and delight, well rewarded. In November, 1896, while acting, at the Garden Theatre, as *Glo'ster*, he wrote to a friend:

I am pleased and flattered that you should have liked *Richard*—but it was far from *my* liking that evening. I do not remember when I have felt more strange and out of place on the stage. It was one of my wooden nights, when nothing less than two cases of champagne would have roused me; as they were not handy—I went to sleep!

What a hideous profession it is, that compels us to produce ourselves, and create, when we are “not in the vein”! There was, too, an imbecile brute in the orchestra who, with a strong yellow light upon his countenance, was fatally determined upon bobbing up and down and turning over sheets of music, and he always did so just as I was going off into a trance.

We have met, so far, with wonderful and unexpected success. I had the gravest doubts concerning the result, when I accepted the Garden Theatre arrangement. The house has been full, every night. I am glad to be able to say that *I* have not!

In the season of 1897-'98 he employed, as “manager,” Albert Marshman Palmer (1838-1905), sarcastically alleging a vindictive motive for that amiable action. Palmer, who had been one of the most successful and influential of theatrical managers in New York, was infirm in health, poor in circumstances, and broken in spirit, and Mansfield's purpose, in giving him employment, was that of practical kindness, and not that of “vengeance,” as he grimly stated to me that it was. Mansfield did not like Palmer, for the reason, as he intimated to me, that when a member of the Union Square stock-company, he had suffered under the harsh



Photograph by Sarony, New York

ALBERT M. PALMER

exercise of that manager's authority. But Mansfield was kind-hearted, and he did not often cherish enmity. He spoke only the truth of himself when he said that he was "sorry for old people," and he was exceptional, as the world goes, in remembering that persons who, in the noon of their ability and opportunity, have done much and good service, are entitled to consideration in the decadence of their powers and fortunes, and in the twilight of life. It was characteristic, likewise, of his contradictory, perverse nature to ascribe to himself a bad motive for doing a good deed. Palmer became, in fact, his agent, in which capacity several other persons were also employed at the same time. But Mansfield *managed* his affairs himself, and, to the last, permitted no interference with his business schemes and policy.

The theme of "The First Violin" had long been attractive to him, the peculiarly German sentiment and atmosphere of the story, no doubt, appealing strongly to his German taste. That theme, and many others, we had discussed, and I had named to him various plays that it seemed practicable to revive. Some of his comments exhibit his astute consideration of dramatic material and his thorough practical knowledge of his profession:

104 W. 80th Street, New York,

March 5, 1897.

My Dear Winter:—

Thank you for your kind letter and all your kindly interest. I believe, with you, that "—————" is a good thing to do, and I will underline it for next season.

"The Man o' Airlie" will do as it is.

Perhaps, if a good play were written around *Obenreizer*, it might be advisable to do it—altho' I begin to think the less we do disagreeable things the better; however, all depends on the play, does it not? "No Thoroughfare" strikes me as being a bad play.

"Yorick's Love" will need re-writing; it is talky to a degree, and, moreover, a mistake, to my thinking, has been made, in placing the period in Shakespeare's time. There is no change of costume for the Tragedy, and the spectator is puzzled, thereupon, to know whether the scene is being acted on the stage of the Globe, before an audience, or what not.

Concerning the Du Maurier story, now running in Harper's—I fancy that has already been disposed of, and grabbed by some manager; yet there can be no harm in trying to secure the rights.

"The First Violin" is safe to do well, with a fairly good version—with *Eugene* as a character, and the love-story strong. I don't think we want much singing or piano-playing. Unless these are done by a Master (and I am none), they are best left alone.

It is not an easy subject (for a play). *Everything* depends upon the character of *Courvoisier*. I think he ought to be made an actual and a *strong* type—but *how*, I cannot tell.

R. M.

Two or three plays on "The First Violin" were critically examined by him and were rejected, but at last he obtained one that he deemed satisfactory by making it himself, in coöperation with Mr. J. I. C. Clarke. That piece was first acted, April 18, 1898,

at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, and a week later was brought to the Garden Theatre, New York, where it had a prosperous career of five weeks. The pen name assumed by the actor, on that occasion, was *Meridan Phelps*. Mansfield's protest as to "singing or piano-playing,"—an embellishment entirely appropriate to a play about a musician,—was prompted by an odd notion of his that by using those expedients he would too much "entertain" his audience, and thus detract from the estimation in which he wished to be held as an actor. He knew perfectly well the peculiar value of music, when rightly used, in association with drama, and he was likewise aware of his exceptional ability as a musician. But he had once been an "entertainer," and decidedly he wished not again to appear in that capacity or to do anything to invite that designation. Sometimes, indeed, he would use music, both vocal and instrumental, and his use of it would be superbly effective, arousing lively delight and winning whole-hearted applause; but at such times he would view the result with mixed emotions, being at once irritated and gratified by the enthusiastic admiration that his musical accomplishment had evoked. Music, accordingly, was not made conspicuous in his presentation of "The First Violin."

It seems strange, in the retrospect, that Mans-

field did not produce "Othello." At almost any time in his career a production of that play would have commanded public attention, and, even when he was most loath to approach a heavy undertaking, "Othello" did, sometimes, come into his mind as an alternative. After he had become recognized and established as the leader of the American stage,—a position which, in later years, was generally conceded to him,—a revival of that tragedy, with alternate assumptions of *Othello* and *Iago*, would certainly have been expedient for him, and, probably, it would have prospered: for, terrible though it is, and inexpressibly pathetic and cruelly harrowing to the feelings, that play, technically considered, as a piece of dramatic construction, is the greatest in our language, and it provides boundless opportunities for acting, and exerts a tremendous influence upon an audience. Mansfield's active spirit was ever chafing under the ardent desire of doing fine things, and many were the projects that he considered (1897), pursued for a while, and then cast aside. More than once he thought of acting *Hamlet*, but from that undertaking I earnestly dissuaded him. *Hamlet* is a part to which he was entirely unsuited, and, happily, he never experimented with it, though several times he had almost determined to announce that he would play it:

104 W. 80th Street, New York,

November 11, 1897.

My Dear Winter:—

Will you dine here with me next Sunday evening, at seven? It is necessary I should see you—and I *can't* get over to the island you inhabit.

Life is full of vexations, trials and disappointments—nothing survives but the memory; and let it be the memory of *happy* hours!

We put “————” into rehearsal. It's *too* deadly—it won't do!—we'd starve!! I want a version of “Henry V.,” and some day I'll have to do *Hamlet*. You understand, the living *will* do these things. It's expected. You may as well accept these things as necessary evils—and let me have a good version, and coach me. At present I *know* nothing about it. *Say* Sunday?

Yours ever,

R. M.

Another subject for a play upon which he meditated was Victor Hugo's great novel, “*Les Misérables*.” That story, as all readers know, is wonderfully interesting, profoundly humanitarian, and inexpressibly pathetic, but practically it is not dramatic. A play based upon it was submitted to his attention, but ultimately he decided that the part of *Valjean* would prove gloomy and dreary, besides being an exhaustive tax upon his strength, and so he wisely relinquished the idea of acting it. His views relative to heavy productions on the stage were expressed to me, in reference to that

piece, which, indeed, I had tried to edit for his use, when he was considering the subject:

My Dear Old Fellow:—

I do *not* think that I could undertake a *heroic* part, and I *could not* put on an expensive production—nothing like Paris during the Revolution, and with such scenes as a fight at the barricades would entail. And then Five Acts and a Prologue—I am afraid we won't find any audience to stand that, no matter how good the play may be—unless the acts are very short.

We never commence in New York until 8.30, and you know we must be out at eleven. We *allow* seven minutes for the setting of a scene—altho', in these days, it generally *takes* 12. Therefore, the modern play-goer gets, practically, one and a half hours of solid play! It is on this account, partly, that I have been so strenuously opposing productions, of late. This scenery is ruining me—scenery, and dresses, and heaps of people! Here I am with a salary list of \$1,800 a week. By April I shall have paid out \$53,000 in salaries alone!

If we were to play *only* in New York or in London—with occasional trips into the larger cities of the Provinces, I should be all right, and able to produce many plays finely, but I go from Oshkosh to Kalamazoo—I have no abiding place, and I live on the railroad track! The railway expenses for people and scenery are enormous; railroads last week, \$1,256! If I am ever to make money I must follow Jefferson's example, and find a powerful character with an inexpensive cast, and no scenery.

A really fine play may run to decent business for one month in New York—all the rest is a loss and an advertisement for the Provinces—and they no longer accept a New York verdict—they judge for themselves, and the little writers of the local papers are striving to form local judgment.

If we want to make money we must have a *great* character, in the simplest setting. And I do not desire to appear always

as an old man—I want a simple story, and a strong love interest, and *no scenery*. I must use my youth whilst it lasts—it is nearly gone—and convince the girls that I know how to make love, and show them that I have some fire and passion. I shall be in New York in three weeks, and we look forward to seeing you.

Yours ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Mansfield's disapproval of the use of elaborate, heavy, and costly scenery was, unquestionably, judicious, because the investiture of a play should always be subordinated to its intrinsic interest and dramatic power, meaning, and value. It happened, however, strangely enough, that his final relief from a crushing burden of debt, and likewise his acquisition of almost unrivalled popularity throughout the country, ensued from a production of the heaviest kind and a play of ephemeral interest. A little while before "Valjean" was suggested to him,—mention of Hugo's novel having been made because of his known desire for great and impressive subjects,—he had written to me:

I *am* THE man—and I intend to stay there. I have no small ambitions, and if I find it impossible to do good and noble work I shall do none at all. My purposes are to present great historical plays, to depart from tradition, to instruct while I entertain. I have in view *Napoleon Bonaparte*, *Frederick the Great*, *Henry the Eighth* (not Shakespeare's), and, for lighter work, I shall present fairy tales for children, but fairy tales

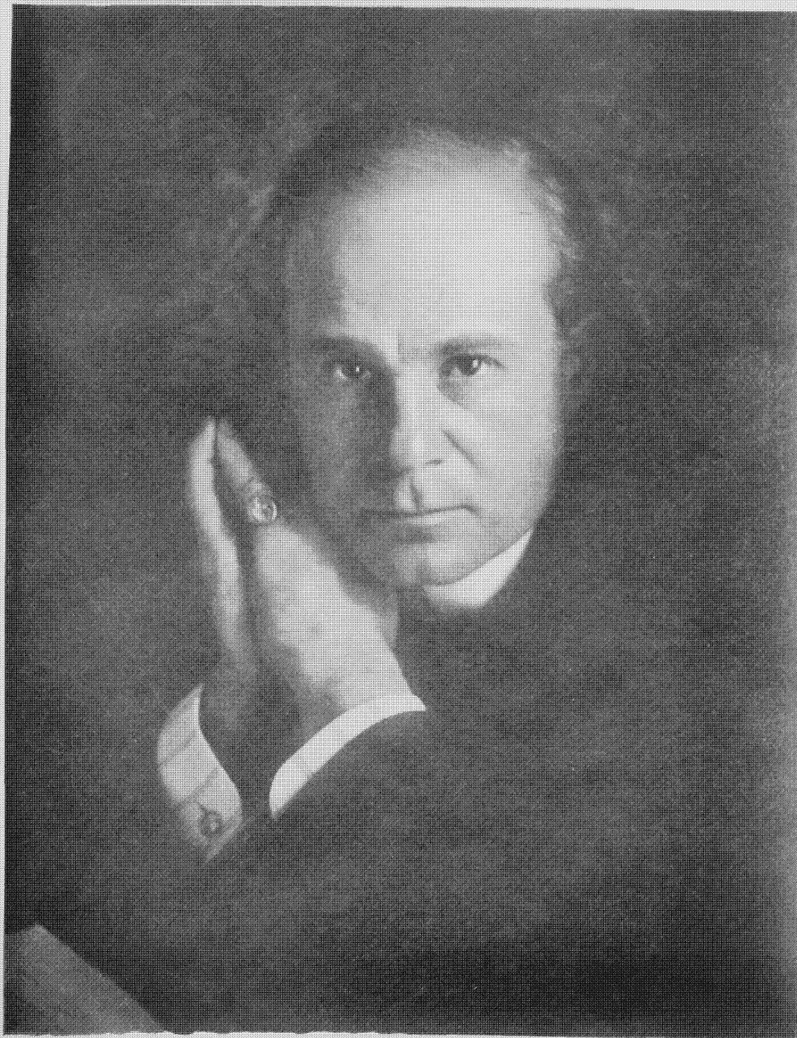
that have a powerful moral, such as "The Man Without a Shadow." I *need* new plays—that's all!

Early in 1898, while prosperous with "The Devil's Disciple" and while preparing to produce "The First Violin," he heard of the success that Constant Coquelin had achieved abroad with "Cyrano de Bergerac," and he considered the expediency of offering to his public an English version of that French drama. His season in New York ended on June 14, and in July he went to London, where he saw, at the Lyceum Theatre, the performance of that play, given by Coquelin and a French company. Whatever doubt he might have entertained as to the feasibility of acting the Rostand romance in English was dispelled, and, returning to America, he immediately began active preparations for its presentment. It was not protected by American copyright, and he could not acquire the exclusive control of it, but he hoped and expected to prevail in holding it, by his priority, his commanding position, and the splendor of scenic adornment with which he would invest it. The result measurably justified his expectation. "Cyrano de Bergerac" was produced by him at the Garden Theatre, New York, on October 3, 1898, and it proved an affluent, unequivocal success. On the same night, in Phila-

delphia, another version of the play was produced by Augustin Daly,—Ada Rehan acting *Roxane*, and Mr. Charles Richman acting *Cyrano*; and soon a bounteous crop of bulbous-snouted lovers overspread the stage, as if some Cadmus had been sowing noses instead of dragon's teeth all over the land. Mansfield retained *Cyrano* in his repertory for more than a year, acting it almost continuously, and drawing crowds of interested spectators wherever he appeared. It was not until December, 1899, that he deemed it advisable to revert to selections from the repertory in which he had already been accepted.

The germ of the central idea contained in "Cyrano de Bergerac" could have been found in Balzac's novel of "Modeste Mignon": at all events, it occurs there. The heroine of that fiction begins a correspondence with *Canalis*, who turns the affair over to his secretary, *La Brière*, and the latter, in the assumed personality of his patron, makes a noble showing of himself, and fascinates, and ultimately wins, the lady. Rostand's play is not directly based on Balzac's novel,—since it uses a different set of characters, and illustrates its theme in a different way and pursues it to a different conclusion. But the theme has been exhausted by Balzac, whose treatment of it is exceedingly felicitous. The late Mr.

Paul Leicester Ford, long an esteemed friend of Mansfield's, treated the same postulate, in a modified manner, in a composition called "The Story of an Untold Love." Still another tale relative to this idea was written, many years ago, by Mrs. Frank McCarthy, entitled "Wanted—a Soul." Mansfield's production of "Cyrano" conferred the "luxury of woe" on thousands of such persons as are interested in the troubles of true love. Its course, as usual, did not run smooth. In January, 1899, Mansfield, when acting in Chicago, was sued, conjointly with Edmond Rostand, for royalties on "Cyrano de Bergerac," and was enjoined from further presentment of the play, but later the restriction was removed. The plaintiff in the suit was Mr. Samuel Eberly Gross, who charged that Rostand's play was a plagiarism of a drama by him, called "The Merchant Prince of Cornville," which, he declared, had been acted at the Novelty Theatre, London, as long ago as November 11, 1896, when Rostand might have seen it or heard of it. The decision in the case, ratified, by Judge C. C. Kohlsaat, in the United States Circuit Court for the Northern District of Illinois, was favorable to Mr. Gross. Careful study of Mr. Gross's play and comparison of it with that of M. Rostand, did not then, and does not now, discover any adequate reason



Photograph by E. W. Histed, New York

RICHARD MANSFIELD IN 1898

for supposing that M. Rostand had an acquaintance with Mr. Gross's drama, when he wrote "Cyrano de Bergerac." The protagonist of the play was one of his countrymen, recorded and described in French biography, and the learning of M. Rostand had so impressed Coquelin as to cause that actor to say "He knows everything." There can be no doubt that he possessed ample knowledge of the history of his native land and was under no necessity of seeking inspiration or information about Cyrano from a writer in Chicago. The probable indebtedness of M. Rostand to Balzac has already been intimated. The author to whom, obviously, he is indebted is Shakespeare. Mansfield, however, was obliged to pay royalties to Mr. Gross, for the use of M. Rostand's drama, and that payment he made, as long as he continued to act in it.

IX.

1899 TO 1906.

WITH the production of "Cyrano de Bergerac" the tide of pecuniary emolument turned in Mansfield's favor, and in his favor, thereafter, it continued to flow. No play that he subsequently produced could be accounted a total failure, while several of his later productions were abundantly remunerative. "The Misanthrope," indeed, did not prove popular; but he did not lose money by it, and his recourse to *Alceste* was advantageous to his professional reputation. "Don Carlos" was not largely attractive; but the revival of it gratified the German public, and by his picturesque, passionate impersonation of its hero he augmented his renown. "Peer Gynt" did not obtain the lucrative acceptance that he had hoped for it,—thinking, as he did, that the public was eager for something bizarre; but his fine acting sustained even that dreary burden for a little while, his popularity averting disaster from the representation of nebulous gammon. The other productions that he made were munificently compensated. With "Henry

V.," "Beaucaire," "Julius Cæsar," "Old Heidelberg," and "Ivan the Terrible" he was triumphant, and in his later years his well-tried repertory was "a tower of strength." A serious illness interrupted his industry early in 1899, and kept him from the stage for three weeks, February 13 to March 6, and, in the spring of 1900, he was obliged to close his season earlier than he had intended, because of a disabling affection of the throat; but he met with no other serious impediment. The prosperity that then attended his professional labor not only enabled him, as time passed, to pay all his debts,—an adjustment of worldly affairs in which he found great satisfaction,—but to accumulate a considerable property, which he destined for the wife and child whom he idolized. His view of himself as a man of business was ingenuously expressed to me, about that time, 1899, on an occasion when I had ventured to remonstrate with him, upon some apparent extravagance: "You are mistaken," he said; "I am *not* extravagant. Some of the greatest financiers have been extravagant,—witness Fouqué. But I am not. Most of the persons whom I employ think I make money easily, and that there will be extravagance, and that money is to be easily made out of me. But they are mistaken. I am, in fact, a very close calculator, or I should not be alive

to-day. I am always ready to give freely, but I can only do that by watching closely every dollar that I earn, or that is rightly mine, and I do so." That was an amiable delusion. He did not "watch his dollars,"—unless, indeed, he watched their flight. "There goes a man," he said to me, one day when we were strolling in the avenue, "whom I could send to prison. He is a thief. He has stolen at least \$50,000 of my money." Mansfield's losses were large. During his theatrical seasons in England, in 1888-'89, as certified by himself, they amounted to \$167,000. Between that time and 1895 he suffered other heavy losses,—although also he earned much money, and "paid as he went." His sickness in 1895 cost him \$80,000, but, as he then wrote, "I have saved my theatre,"—meaning the Garrick. He had not saved it for long, however, and while he continued to retain it his losses were increased. In short, he must have carried, for some time, a debt verging to nearly half a million. By 1901, through one agent alone, he had paid more than \$200,000, squaring accounts with various creditors, but it was not till the end of the season of 1904-'05 that he was completely clear of debt and could think of his possessions as free from encumbrance. Those facts indicate the magnitude of his ultimate professional popularity and of the

compensation that he obtained for his professional exertions. Prosperity on the stage had enabled him to make profitable investments that helped to unshackle him. It was prosperity richly deserved; for Mansfield made splendid productions; he put forth all his strength; and, in dealing with the public, he was never niggard of either his money or himself: he was never known to slight a performance, however trivial the part that he assumed or however unimportant the place in which he happened to be acting. The noble achievements of his later years imply an opulent yet sorrowful suggestion of the great things that he would have done, if sufficient wealth had come to him earlier in life. No actor has ever proclaimed a more generous ideal of management than Mansfield avowed, on the last night of his presentment of "Richard III.," at Palmer's Theatre, in 1889. "What I take from the public with one hand," he said, "I will give back with the other."

A German proverb declares that "Living is striving." Up to the point where he gained affluent financial success with "Cyrano de Bergerac" Mansfield's professional life, as shown in many details of it and as indicated in some of his letters, was one of incessant toil, carking anxiety, and fretful contention. From that point onward, although his

high endeavor was not abated nor his strenuous exertion relaxed, he advanced more easily, he acquired more sincerity, he dwelt more in the sunshine, and he was happier than before. Success did not entirely tranquillize him nor remove all asperity from his character and manners: no man ever escapes from himself: but it made him more gentle, considerate, and philosophical, and gradually it turned his thoughts, and perhaps his wishes, toward discontinuance of the struggle. In one of his letters to me, half playful, half serious, written in the season of 1899-'00, that inclination was indicated: "I fully realize what you say about the twilight of our lives, but some of us—and you are one—have calciums in our 'in'ards,' that can brilliantly illumine our days, to the end. Therefore, be of good cheer. I should greatly like to see you. *I* have set the limit to this business—five more years, and then a cottage, and honeysuckle, and jasmine, and all the sweet flowers of the garden, and a whiff of the ocean, in dear old England! I am sick to death of the sawdust that the doll is stuffed with." He was, nevertheless, still eager for novelties. "We are, unfortunately, without a new play," he wrote, "because the French gentleman(?), to whom I paid \$5,500 for a play, has kept my money, but has delivered no ms. These foreign people treat every-



Photograph by Reutlinger

EDMOND ROSTAND

thing about us with great contempt—excepting always our money." The disappointment was not without its compensation, for it hastened his resort to an earlier choice, and caused him once more to try a Shakespearean revival. The imposing historical play of "Henry V.," which had not been acted in New York since 1875,—when Charles Calvert produced it, at Booth's Theatre, with George Rignold as *King Henry*,—was wisely selected for that venture. He had long been thinking of it. "I am very anxious," he wrote, "that you should edit a playing version of 'Henry V' Both Charles Kean and Calvert cut the play—notably the speeches of *Henry*—all to pieces. I have restored all the fine passages. I desire, particularly, a Preface from your pen. Appleton will publish the book." It seemed to me best that he should himself edit the play and write the Preface, since that labor, exacting nice discrimination as to every detail, could not fail to deepen the concentration of his thought upon the subject, and fortify his command of it. "I am more sorry than I can say," he answered, replying to my refusal, "that you cannot undertake to write the Introduction to our version of 'Henry V.,' because, just at this time, there exists a condition of affairs the like of which, I suppose, is unknown in theatrical history—and it would be

well for the 'bosses' to know that they cannot boss all of us. We have had unheard-of trouble in staging 'Henry V.' After signing the contracts for the Garden, the Frohmans arranged with Mr. Sothern to come in, for a fortnight, before us, and gave him the use of the Theatre throughout the entire summer. We have been forced to rehearse, to build, to paint, anywhere—even in Brooklyn!" All obstacles were surmounted, though, and on October 3, 1900, at the Garden Theatre, New York, he accomplished a magnificent representation of that superb drama, acting *Henry of Monmouth* for the first time, and giving a performance of extraordinary vigor, variety, and beauty. His book of the play, with a thoughtful, interesting Preface and Notes, by himself, and with Notes on the Heraldry of the play, by Alfred J. Rodwaye, F.R.H.S., was published in the same season. In his presentation of "Henry V." scrupulous attention was given to details, yet, strangely enough, in the Battle Scene, during the early performances, the royal standard of Great Britain was reared, a banner not adopted till nearly three hundred years after Henry V. had been laid in his grave.

The season of 1900-'01 was devoted exclusively to "Henry V.," and then, on October 7, 1901, inaugurating a new theatre in Philadelphia, called

The Garrick, he brought out a new play, entitled “Beaucaire,” which had been made for him by Mr. Booth Tarkington and Mrs. E. G. Sutherland, and in that he gave a light, bright, charming performance. The play was derived from a sparkling narrative, largely infused with colloquy, by Mr. Tarkington, in which, contrary to custom in tales of romance, the lover renounces his idol, upon finding that she is a selfish, worldly, time-serving woman, unworthy of love. That point was waived in the drama, conformably to the accepted theory that “a happy ending” is indispensable to a love-story on the stage. The play is a compound of the usual conventional incidents,—love, misunderstanding, impediment, peril, rescue, explanation, villainy defeated, virtue rewarded, and ultimate connubial bliss. It provided Mansfield with an opportunity, which he ably improved, of manifesting his remarkable skill in light comedy, and it became so popular that he was enabled to use it, during the season of 1901-'02, as the principal feature of his repertory. “Beaucaire” was presented in New York for the first time on December 2, 1901, at the Herald Square Theatre, where it held the stage till January 25, 1902, and thereafter it was taken on a tour, southward as far as New Orleans and northward as far as Montreal.

New St. Charles, New Orleans,

My Dear Winter:—

February 4, 1902.

I was more than sorry that during my visit to New York I could not see you—that I could not come to you and that you could not come to me! It is a great pity that two hearts that beat as one should have to beat so far apart!—And that we can't smoke churchwardens and guzzle and chatter and nod and be Goldsmith and Garrick and all the rest of it:—

"I where the lights are shining,
You, all alone, in the gloom."

It's time we had a little fun!

Next year—next summer—I go abroad. Beatrice leaves shortly for England, to find a home—will you go up to see her, and tell her about places—you know all about it, and can give her the most valuable advice. It is to be a cottage, all our own, where love and comfort and a modest competency are to attend our declining days—without regard to the nobility and gentry of the neighborhood. It is to be hoped that *you* will come and occasionally sojourn with *Micawber*! If you'll come to us in England, we will arrange to write "The Humorous Life of Mansfield," By an Eye-Witness.

My love to you,

R. M.

The purpose of establishing a permanent home for himself in England had long been in his mind, but it was never fulfilled. At the close of this tour, which ended at Montreal on July 4, he sailed from that port, and he passed several weeks at Weybridge, one of the loveliest retreats in the lovely county of Surrey—a land that lures the tired mortal to stay in it forever. In the meantime he thus cheerily recorded his doings and impressions.



RICHARD MANSFIELD

“WORKING FOR MONEY” 265

St. Nicholas Hotel, St. Louis,
April 10, 1902.

My Dear Winter:—

Sorry you are not quite all right—but I suppose California will quickly make you well. Sorry too that you are not going to England this summer. Beatrice will be sailing on the sea before you get this. She leaves on Saturday, by the *Minnehaha*. She, the boy, and the governess. She will find a place in England, and I shall—D. V.—join her in July, leaving from Montreal, where I close my season. If you had been on the other side, need I say how glad we should have been to have had a long visit from you?

I will send your letter to B. and perhaps some of the places you mention may attract her—but I fancy she will want to be nearer London. Some of the so-called authors want to interview me about plays—which become more and more difficult to obtain. No one knows *what* to produce. Shakespeare's plays have to be so garnished that the cost of production and the subsequent cost of transportation of scenery and company eat up all profits. In London Mr. Tree is producing “spectacles” only. “Ulysses” seems to be a sort of Christmas pantomime. “Herod” was disgusting, and “Paola and Francesca” futile. Also, as there are no actors in England, there are no authors.

Irving tells me he will do nothing new. I am thinking only of saving enough money for B. and the boy to live on. If nothing good comes along I shall revive, next season, a large repertory of plays, *well* done as to scenery and costumes. This will, probably, pay as well as anything else, and, after all is said, we *are* working for money, and if it doesn't come in we are simply *not successful*.

—— is sailing (and so is Mrs. ——) on the *Minnehaha*, with B. and the boy, so B. will not want for company. Mrs. —— is an energetic Lady who is always starting some new enterprise and then dropping it. She coquettes with Fortune and is so fickle that she is eternally dropping the bone to pick

up the shadow. Her last venture was a millinery establishment—her next may be a livery stable or a Tea Garden. However it keeps her amused, and —— guessing!

I hear Miss Adams is to play *Juliet*, all next season: Sothern *Hamlet*, Goodwin *Othello* and *Iago*, Hackett *King Lear*, and Faversham Gilbert Parker's "Right of Way," and all the novels of the season are to be dramatized. The Bible (The Syndicate has discovered that this book is well-known) is being largely employed for Dramatic purposes. I have had three plays about *David*—who seems to have been a very disreputable person—and even the Lambs Club has produced a comic opera on the subject of our Lord! I don't know what will happen next! The success of "Ben Hur" has set these people going.

Cheer up! and believe me always yours,

R. M.

On Tour, Duluth,

June 23, 1902.

My Dear Winter:—

It was a great pleasure to hear from you. This season has been somewhat unduly protracted by fat managers who sit and smoke cigars and "book dates." I have been travelling for weeks and weeks—sometimes I have been bumped for thirty-six hours at a stretch.

A letter which I wrote to "The Herald" regretting the publicity accorded every wretched "faker" who doesn't want to work, or can't act—and thus encouraging incompetency, idleness, and cheap advertisement—has been largely circulated amongst "the profession," and "The Herald" has *requested* Mr. Tree's opinion, etc., etc., as to the decadence of the stage. Mr. Tree and the rest of that lot, both in England and here, are of the opinion that I am an ass (in which I entirely agree with them!) and that nobody in the world ever lived who could act as finely as Tree and his lot do! "The Herald" has been very careful to avoid asking the opinion of anybody that

knows anything. Irving, Wyndham, Coquelin, have all recently bemoaned the fact that it is almost impossible to secure even a decent actor or actress, for a reasonable compensation.

I am trying to make up a cast for "Julius Cæsar," but it is very difficult. I shall have to play *Brutus*. And he is, after all is said—the *man*.

I am sailing from Montreal on July 5, on the Allan Steamer (the name of which is uncertain, as, just as soon as I have engaged a passage on one of the line it is instantly engaged by the British Government to import Boers or deport mules!). However, I sail on the 5th of July, and, if you are on the dock, with your bag, early—*very* early—I will take you along with me. I spend a couple of months at Weybridge on the Thames.

Yours always,

RICHARD.

On his return from England, in August, 1902, he went to New London, Conn., and, taking a fancy for that picturesque, interesting old town (the region was, many years ago, declared by Humboldt to be exceptionally blessed, as to soil, air, and water, with all the natural conductions to perfect health), he bought the first of the three estates there of which ultimately he was the possessor, and, styling it "The Grange," determined that it should be his final residence, and soon, by alteration and embellishment, converted it into a veritable Baronial Hall, such as he had often dreamed of possessing, in some peaceful English rural nook, "far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife."

Mansfield's passionate desire to be everywhere recognized as, absolutely and indisputably, the greatest actor of his time was in no respect abated, but rather was intensified, by every success that he achieved, and, to the end of his days, his ambition was never satisfied nor his mind ever wholly at rest. Supremacy in the impersonation of the great characters in Shakespeare was the prerogative at which he aimed. He was not an imitator of anybody, but, like many other of the actors of his generation, he had observed the careers of Edwin Booth and Henry Irving, and, unlike the mere servile imitators of those chieftains, he had early determined not only to emulate but, if possible, to surpass them, in breadth of policy, audacity of adventure, and scope, variety, and importance of achievement. He had noted Booth's wisdom in a steadfast adherence to Shakespeare, and he had considered the success attendant upon Irving's choice of weird characters and great historic themes. In itself original and inclined to take new paths, his mind was much stimulated, as well as instructed, by those examples, and his quest for untried subjects and for parts not less novel than important was, accordingly, never pretermitted. Several characters, out of the beaten track, have already been named, upon which his fancy looked with an approving eye, but which



"THE GRANGE"
Mansfield's New London Home

he could not assume, for lack of plays in which to present them. At one time he was eager to act *Miles Standish*. At another time he studied *Conrad*, in an English version of the Italian play of "Morte Civile," by P. Giacometti,—made known on the American stage by the famous Italian actor, Salvini, in 1873,—but, after putting that drama into rehearsal, he found it unsatisfactory, and dropped it. At still another time his fancy turned to *Charles the Second*. While performing in "Beaucaire," which he viewed as little more than a pleasing bagatelle, he was conscious of the longing for higher employment, and he determined to act *Brutus*, in Shakespeare's great play of "Julius Cæsar." His revival of that tragedy was accomplished, at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, on October 13, 1902, and it was received with enthusiastic favor. Writing to me about it, ten days later, he said: "Our business is enormous. We have not had a seat to sell this entire week, and it is only a question, every evening, how many people will consent to stand up."

His presentment of "Julius Cæsar" was, in the matter of scenic investiture, the best, of that play, ever made in America,—many of the sets being those that were, originally, devised and painted by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, for Henry Irving's London Lyceum production of "Coriolanus,"—the

thirteenth and last Shakespearean play brought out by that actor. Mansfield's embodiment of *Brutus* was original in ideal and fine in execution, the image of a noble person, fanatically centred upon himself, fatally besieged by one sacrificial, delusive idea, and predestinate to ruin. He devoted the entire season of 1902-'03 to that tragedy, and his practical success with it was great. He brought it to the capital on December 1, 1902, appearing at the Herald Square Theatre, and he acted there until January 17, 1903. A tour of many cities succeeded, after which he took a summer rest, partly in his villa at New London, and partly aboard a yacht which he had recently purchased.

Shelter Island, Schooner *Amorita*,

My Dear Winter:—

June 23, 1903.

I'm sorry you have gone,—or rather *had* to go,—to California; for the fact and for the cause. I wanted you to don your flannels, your jauntiest straw hat, stow away a quid in your cheek, and do the rollicking tar with me. Not that I *have* been rollicking. You can't rollick much in a steady downpour of rain, lasting three weeks, with intermittent fog, and a gale that came very near wrecking us, altho' we had two anchors down. I managed to fly in here yesterday, and flying it was,—just in time to save my skin! for it has been blowing great guns all night and all the morning. But it is jolly to lie snug in my cabin with my feet considerably higher than my head, a pipe, a toddy, the lamps lighted, the wind howling in the rigging and the utter impossibility of anybody coming aboard to bother me, unless they *swim* out. Still I *do* wish the sun would shine

again. If it stayed like this always it would be the end of all things, for all would fade and rot. The fruit does not ripen and the flowers are pale and without perfume.

I am sorry, sorry about Louis. He should not be permitted to worry or to think of cares. You deserve better, much better things. *Is there anything I can do for you or him?*

For my part *my* plans are to play "Ivan the Terrible" and "Alt Heidelberg" next season.

All good things to you and yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

It was his policy, and it was judicious, to alternate heavy parts with light ones, and the choice that he made of a play to follow "Julius Cæsar" proved exceedingly fortunate. His selection was "Old Heidelberg," in which, as *Prince Henry*, he gave a lovely performance,—one which, in spirit and spontaneity, more than any other achievement of his career, revealed all that there was of essential manliness and sweetness in his nature. The character would be insignificant if it were merely shown, for it is one that imperatively requires, in a special sense, impersonation. Visible presence, audible speech, motion, and "business" often suffice to constitute a *performance* and make known a theatrical fable. Many worthy persons, for example, have played *Hamlet*, without ever once becoming identified with the part or really acting it. In the character of *Prince Henry* there is an intrinsic beauty which must be made actual in the representa-

tion, and if Mansfield had not possessed the elemental attributes of nobility, integrity, and virtuous affection, he could not have caused the entirely delightful effect which attended his revelation of it. "Old Heidelberg," an adaptation from the German, was produced by him, on October 12, 1903, to inaugurate the Lyric Theatre, New York, then first opened. It is a play that touches life on the pathetic side, and yet provides the contrast of light and cheer. He acted in it, at the Lyric, till November 7, and then travelled with it,—all the while studying and preparing the far more powerful drama of "Ivan the Terrible."

Union Station, Baltimore,

My Dear Winter:—

February 1, 1904.

Everybody is in despair! *We* are to come to the New Amsterdam Theatre in New York, on the 29th of this month—to present some old plays and one new—"Ivan the Terrible." I *do* wish things were better with you: livelier and more hopeful, that you had somebody by you to cheer your life! work, work, work, and no play, makes Jack a dull boy. With *me* it seems about the same thing, for I am at it with very poor results, from early till late; and I get no time for study, which is the worst feature of the whole business; there seems to be an endless string of doubtful humanity waiting to interview me about everything and nothing. There is more talk in this world than is good for it!

Well, here's luck to you!

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Mansfield's quest of extraordinary themes for dramatic treatment was not at any time relaxed. The literary movement which is represented by such writers as Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Sudermann, and the Italian who calls himself D'Annunzio had attracted his attention and, to a slight extent, had influenced his professional conduct. He did not wish to be extravagant, but he did wish to be unusual. I have an amused remembrance of having carefully refrained from directing his attention to the Emperor Julian, whose complex and deeply interesting character, singular aspect, and wonderful career might have inspired him to cause the composition of still another of those ponderous tragedies of Roman history which repose upon our book-shelves like the huge tombs in a Scotch necropolis. "I read plays by the score," he wrote: "subjects present themselves, and are discarded only to give place to another idea, which is dismissed." It was in one of those moods of perplexity that he finally chose a subject from the history of Russia.

The presentment of Count Alexis Tolstoi's "Ivan the Terrible," March 1, 1904, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, was one of the great achievements of Mansfield's career. The character of *Ivan*, which is analyzed elsewhere in this book, makes a prodigious draft equally upon the emotions and the physical resources

of an actor,—being that of a cruel, superstitious, fanatical, sanguinary, ruthless despot, by turns vacilliant and resolute, but always grim and dangerous, who, under circumstances equally dramatic and afflicting, is overtaken by the avenging doom of retributive justice. Mansfield's performance signally exemplified the art of impersonation and was marked by intense feeling and great tragical power.

316 Riverside Drive,

My Dear Winter:—

March 2, 1904.

Beatrice, who will not allow me to read the newspapers, has presented me with your more than generous review of "Ivan," and I hasten to thank. If the stage were approached in this spirit by all, how different the stage would be! I wish I deserved all you say, but how fine and truly illuminative our poor art becomes, when the hand of the poet has recorded the view of the poet!

It was a trying time. Imagine being obliged to take an elevator after each scene and being transported to the fourth story! One felt that nothing remained but to order a jug of ice-water and go to bed!

In these days of Clyde Fitches it's pretty difficult to get people to listen to the historical drama. What would be the effect here of the plays concerning Wallenstein, by Schiller, or Don Carlos, or Count Egmont, or even "Henri Quatre et sa Cour," which always delights Paris? "Richard II."? However, something is accomplished, something done—and thank God, *you* are here!

When are you coming up? or at all events, join me at the Theatre one evening and see the Elevator!

What news of Louis? Love from Beatrice,

Yours always,
RICHARD.

It was about this time that he wrote his clever monologue called "As You Find It," in which the common subservience to wealth is displayed and the sycophancy and insincerity possible to human nature are satirized. Mansfield had known poverty and the slights that are put upon it by arrogant wealth, and he did not forget his experience. "It is necessary to be rich," he once said to me; "if you are poor, they make you wait outside, on the mat. If you are rich, they throw the doors wide open and welcome you in. I have had enough of waiting on the mat. I mean to have money and lots of it. I am tired of being patronized by snobs and swells." Social toadyism to wealth, such as Bulwer has ridiculed in his fine comedy of "Money," had become obnoxious to him, and the meanness and absurdity of it are well and humorously exemplified in the sketch of "As You Find It," which, nevertheless, he undervalues, as "silly," in this letter.

Hotel Seville, New York,

October 29, 1904.

My Dear Winter:—

Your characteristically kind letter came this morning. It is good of you to pat me on the back for my *silly* monologue. But, all the same, I will send the pats to New London, for Beatrice; they may do her good.

Charles Wyndham arrives this morning. I am distressed that I can't show him some little attention. He was good to

Beatrice when she was last in London. If you should see him, please tell him, will you? I leave on Saturday—to-morrow—at 8 o'clock, from the Grand Central.

Rehearsals are well progressed but very dreadful. In Boston we are giving *Ivan, Rodion*, "The Merchant," *Richard the Third*, "A Parisian Romance," and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

I wish you *would* look up "Charles II.," if you have the leisure. Also, is there any *old* play that is at all possible—that we could touch up?

All good to you all!

RICHARD.

In the course of this year an impulse of kindness led him to suggest to Miss Ada Rehan the project of a Testimonial theatrical performance, in my honor and for my benefit, which, as soon as I heard of it, I declined to accept. To that project, about which there was some gossip, he makes a passing reference:

Private Car 403,

Newark, N. J., Dec. 15, 1904.

My Dear Winter:—

Yes, I hear Mr. Hackett quite succeeded in ruining "Charles II." However, some day we may be able to do something with the old boy.

You heard from Miss Rehan, I see. She consulted me, and I told her practically what you said—that as long as you are writing it would be a difficult undertaking, that a Testimonial would have to be unanimous, or not at all, and that you are not inclined to take it, any way. But your *retirement* would *naturally* call for such an acknowledgment of your services to Literature and Art. I hope I may be there, to do my little all—and yet I hope it may be a long way off!

It is most dreadfully cold and gloomy here. A barn of a theatre—which gaps like a black cavern and puffs blasts of icy wind upon the miserable, shivering being in tights and a short cloak,—howling Shakespeare into an expanse of unresponsive emptiness! “A horse! a *horse!*—my *kingdom* for a horse!” An automobile would be more to the point! Anything on which to get away. There are numerous kindly disposed creatures here, who invite me to all sorts of impossible entertainments. One old Lady hopes I will come to dinner, quite informally on Saturday, after the matinee!

As always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

His next step was to Molière. We had often talked of the great Frenchman,—his deep knowledge of human nature, his deft, delicate touch, in the portrayal of character and manners, the vicissitude of his fortune, and his sad experience,—and it was indeed a pleasure to hear that a trial would at last be made, in English, by an actor singularly competent to make it, of the classic comedy of France.

Chicago, February 5, 1905.

My Dear Winter:—

I am thinking of giving one of Molière's plays, in March—just for the sake of a novelty and because it will be pleasant for the Ibsen and Shaw cult!

Tell me which you think would be possible. *Tartuffe* I do *not* care to do. Can you advise me?

I had a letter last night from Miss Rehan, to say good-by—poor Lady, she seems always sad, and one can do nothing to cheer her up.

With every good wish that your affairs will soon have a little sunshine in them, believe me,

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

The Virginia Hotel, Chicago, all this week—then I go South and will be at the Tulane Theatre, New Orleans, Feb. 20, but please answer this *at once!*

There could be no hesitancy as to the correct choice. He had decided wisely, in deciding against "Tartuffe,"—a play which, notwithstanding its ingenuity of construction, is obnoxious to good taste, because of its gross fidelity to "the seamy side" of life. The play for Mansfield, obviously, was "The Misanthrope," and I responded to his request by naming that piece, urging him to produce it, and sending to him a copy of it, which I happened to possess, in sheets, of the expert translation made by the late Miss Katherine Prescott Wormeley. The time, to me, was one of bereavement and affliction, my son Louis (previously mentioned in some of Mansfield's letters) having died, after a long and afflicting illness, in California, and it was not easy to think of plays: but labor is the only refuge from sorrow. Mansfield signified his sympathy with the choice of "The Misanthrope" and at once applied himself to the study of *Alceste*,—a character which he was destined to make distinctively his own, upon the American stage, and with which the remembrance of him will long remain entwined.



MR. AND MRS. MANSFIELD AT "THE GRANGE"

Private Car 403, New Orleans,
February 23, 1905.

My Poor Winter:—

I am deeply grieved to hear the sad news—and of course, of course you know you have all my heartfelt sympathy and that of Beatrice.

I understand what you say about your work, but I find, as I go on, that work is about the only thing—the only good thing, that is left to us. *It is the antidote.*

I enclose a notice of "The Merchant" from "The Picayune." It is only recently (the notice is, otherwise, of no importance) that people have recognized that *Shylock* would not be likely to subscribe a deed that would give half his fortune to the man who lately stole his daughter—or to *Antonio*; or that he would consent to become a Christian. There is only one thing for *Shylock*, and that is death. Do you remember whether any other actor had that idea? or indicated clearly that intention?

Our houses are sold out for the remainder of the engagement!

I am hard at work on "The Misanthrope." Heaven only knows if I can ever learn all the words—but the work appeals to me, and if the people can stand Shaw, they *ought* to endure Molière?

With much love and sympathy,

Always yours,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

A disposition to theorize about *Shylock*, propitious to the idea that he is an object of sympathy, always lingered in Mansfield's mind. His genial theory did not much affect the perceptible spirit of his performance, when he acted the part,—its only effect, indeed, being to confuse and perplex exactitude of correct ideal; but he liked to

dwell upon it, and, in particular, he fancied that he had hit upon a remarkably illuminative expedient when he devised "business" suggestive of suicide, at the end of the Trial Scene. The text of the play, meanwhile, is distinctly opposed to that fantastic view of *Shylock*, and, while other actors, from Edmund Kean to Henry Irving, have accentuated good traits in the character, and tried to suffuse it with some little glow of humanity, no other actor ever discovered, in that rapacious, sanguinary usurer, any such Brutus-like grandeur of soul as would constrain him to seek, in self-inflicted death, a refuge from the consequences of defeat in his plan of revenge and murder. If *Shylock* could be considered capable of recourse to that desperate alternative, when baffled, he could equally be considered capable of stabbing *Antonio* to the heart, and then stabbing himself, in the Court of Venice, and so, at least, accomplishing his vengeance. This subject, as a matter of Shakespearean commentary and of acting, is duly considered in another chapter of this memoir. It may not, however, be amiss to indicate a plain reason for the scrupulous anxiety, as to the radically villainous character of *Shylock* that has been evinced by Mansfield, and by other performers of the part who have been conspicuous in recent years. The Hebrew population,

alike in Great Britain and the United States, is numerous and potential, possessing vast wealth and being ardently animated by a racial, clannish spirit. If that population should, within the next half century, increase in numbers and power in the same ratio in which it has increased within the last twenty-five years, it may chance to become the predominant race, in both countries. The question whether that result of time is either likely or desirable is not material here. The point to be noted is that actors of *Shylock* have shown themselves desirous to present the part in such a way as to win the favor and thus the support of the Hebrew population. One of Mansfield's letters distinctly intimates that such was his purpose, while another of his letters imputes a similar purpose to Henry Irving. A scheme of art which perverts a character from the truth, in order to please *anybody*, is manifestly wrong. *Shylock* is a superb part and, when played by a competent actor, is tremendously effective, whatever gloss be put upon it; but *Shylock*, as drawn by Shakespeare, is a treacherous, wily, bloody-minded villain, and no more a representative Jew than *Macbeth* is a representative Scot, or *Iago* a representative Italian, or *Richard* a representative Englishman. He is, indeed, drawn as a Jew; but, though a Jew, he is also a

prodigy; he typifies some of the worst passions in human nature, and those passions are quite as natural to Jews as to members of other races,—a fact which is mentioned, with considerable emphasis, and by an unimpeachable authority, in the old Hebrew Testament.

In the later revivals that Mansfield effected, not only of “The Merchant of Venice” but of “Richard III.,” he shifted the scenes and cut the text in such a way as to mangle those plays almost beyond recognition, his object being to shorten the time occupied in the performance, and to concentrate the burden of representation upon himself. Those portions that he used of the first two acts of the Comedy were commingled in one act, productive of a wearisome effect of prolixity, while the Tragedy was so much altered that, until the last act, it was an episodical jumble. His impersonation of *Richard*, though, was seen to have grown in power and, at the end, was finer than ever,—being the authentic achievement of a tragedian. In the Dream Scene he rose to a splendid climax of mingled emotions and produced a startling effect. My estimate of his assumption of *Shylock*, unhappily, remained irksome to him, although he became sufficiently philosophic to mention it without asperity. “I have read your brilliant essays,” he wrote, “and I see that you

still object to my characterization of *Shylock*. I am sorry: if *you* had to play him you would, probably, *soon change your views*."

On one of his *Shylock* nights, when I chanced to be in front, I sent a written message to him, telling him that I expected and hoped (vain hope!) that I should not again see "The Merchant of Venice," and asking him to act for me; to give me a fine memory of a performance of *Shylock*, and to place exceptional emphasis on the Street Scene—in which, generally, actors fall short of the effect that is possible; and he acted that scene in a thoroughly magnificent manner, rising, indeed, to the full height of its terrific passion and its burning eloquence. Later that evening (March 23, 1905) and before the performance had ended I received this word from *Shylock*:

Dear Winter:—

Thank you for the inspiration. But—it is not going to be your last view of "The Merchant," by very many, and I hope they may all be better than mine!

You see what you did—the audience has never seen this play before, and thought I had finished my invective, not knowing that I had still more noise in me! I'm playing only for you—my subtlest; nobody else will understand it but you. Do go to the Holland House to-night? It is *bitterly* cold!

Your R. M.

On March 20, 1905, Mansfield began an engagement at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, acting *Brummell*. Selections from his repertory followed, and on April 10 he brought out "The Misanthrope" and, for the first time, acted *Alceste*. His impersonation, essentially a gem of dramatic art, was greatly admired, especially by those observers who perceive and enjoy acuteness of intellect, refinement of style, and precision of expressive art; but it did not win much popular favor. *Alceste*, a consummate image of polished, severe, aristocratic manners, in a picturesque, ornate environment, is representative of uncompromising honesty, and therefore he is in continual antagonism with the duplicities, numberless and inveterate, that accompany social intercourse. Mansfield,—original in mind, sensitive in temperament, earnest in feeling, satirical in mood, and somewhat embittered by harsh experience,—was deeply sympathetic with that character, and he made it actual in representation. The comedy of "The Misanthrope" requires, for an adequate performance of it, a complete company of actors of the highest order: that requirement was not fulfilled. The acting of Mansfield, in all the plays that he presented during this season, was marked by extraordinary vigor and superlative finish. The engagement in New York was ended on

April 22, at the Harlem Opera House, and he then departed to other cities.

On Easter, 1905, at Palm Beach, Fla., died that good man and great actor, Joseph Jefferson, passing away, aged 76,—after a continuous professional career of 72 years, the longest in the annals of the American stage,—in the fulness of honor, everywhere respected and loved. Mansfield's acquaintance with Jefferson was slight, but he admired the veteran and, if circumstances had permitted, would have been glad to follow his example. With actors in general he did not cultivate personal association, but he was always mindful of the honor and dignity of the Theatre and always practically sympathetic with every rational movement for the good of his profession: in 1902, for example, he performed in aid of "The Actors' Home," and gained for that excellent establishment about \$9,000. He also earnestly advocated the plan of a Subsidized Theatre, believing that it would benefit society, and tend toward the redemption and protection of his calling from mercenary, unscrupulous, and degrading control. His temper was not naturally unsocial, but his experience had made him somewhat austere, and his laborious professional occupations restricted him very much to himself. His judgment of acting was severe

and not always correct, but fine talent well employed failed not to elicit his admiration. It is significant of his taste that he was enthusiastic in praise of Ada Rehan and of that accomplished comedian J. E. Dodson. The acting of Jefferson greatly delighted him, and he deeply valued the good-will of that illustrious person. Once, when a pernicious newspaper "interview" had misrepresented Jefferson, as having disparaged him, he was much hurt and annoyed. "I do not know," he said,—to a reporter who sought him and displayed the "interview,"—"why Mr. Jefferson should concern himself with my acting, and I am sorry to hear that it troubles him. I believe it is fifteen years since he attended one of my performances." That remark was published and presently it was shown to Jefferson, who immediately wrote to Mansfield, with that honesty and directness for which he was noted, a blunt disclaimer of the calumny:

Lexington, Ky.,
April 6, 1900.

My Dear Mr. Mansfield:—

I was much surprised to have the enclosed article handed to me, by my son. There was, certainly, a conversation regarding Acting in general, at Atlanta, and, naturally, your name came up, amongst others. It is quite possible that some alert reporter heard the remark made, which he, either by mistake or mischief, has attributed to me. On the contrary, when

some such remark was made, I replied that I considered you a fine actor, and that your acting was *always* interesting to me. This is the full extent of my offence. In my career upon the stage I have made it a rule not to condemn my brother actors in public.

With cordial regards to Mrs. Mansfield and yourself, I am,
Sincerely yours,

J. JEFFERSON.

The season of 1904-'05 ended at Cleveland, on June 8, and the tired actor went to his home at New London, intending to rest; but the necessity of fresh enterprise in his profession continually stimulated him to fresh endeavor, and his thoughts were ever busy with the future, permitting no repose. He had presented one of the best comedies in the old literature of France. He now resolved upon reanimating one of the most admired tragedies existent in the old literature of Germany. "I have played all the parts," he said—meaning that he had shown an image of each representative variety of character, a statement not exactly accurate,—"I have run the gamut. There is nothing in sight but 'Don Carlos.'" He was not confident of the success of the project, but he knew the worth of the play, long esteemed a German classic; he hoped that the German populace would rally to his support, in the venture; and, after careful study of the original and of approved translations, he made an

acting version and prepared for the presentment of it. Schiller's play, in its original form (1787), is inimical to the Roman Catholic Church, and Mansfield, strongly desirous not to promote or participate in a theological wrangle, edited the text in such a way as to exclude offence to sectarians, and also he extirpated political and oratorical flourishes,—utilizing only the dramatic elements of the tragedy. He was, nevertheless, apprehensive of the unjust and possibly injurious censure of a bigoted pulpit,—which, indeed, he did not escape,—and his mind was likewise disquieted by newspaper disparagement. His health was poor and his letters were sadly indicative of despondency and discontent.

The Grange, New London,
August 16, 1905.

My Dear Winter:—

I was very glad to hear from you, and I am very much flattered and delighted with the very splendid things you were good enough to say about me, in Chicago and San Francisco.

My late letters and their tone of despondency were entirely due to certain articles in certain papers, notably in "The Sun." It is futile to do good work—to have done good work, in this country. The conditions are such that every effort is belittled and every ambition derided.

You speak of my influence: I have none. I can do nothing whatever, and have nothing to say. The actors themselves are all only too glad to get a good salary and study one part a season, and this they can do, with Mr. Frohman and others.



RICHARD MANSFIELD IN 1905

I stand quite alone, for both the Frohmans and the other managers and all the actors are against me.

Mr. John Drew was recently elected President of the Players Club, to succeed, by right of merit, to the position occupied by Mr. Booth and Mr. Jefferson. I have never been deferred to, upon any occasion whatsoever, and my advice or opinion is not wanted. No college has ever bestowed any degree upon *me*, unless it be that of A. S. S. There is no artistic society or atmosphere, and I evolve everything out of myself and am utterly alone.

That I fail to present merely "catch pennies" is simply in order to preserve my self-respect. If I were to join hands with Mr. — or Mrs. —, they would betray me the next day, and I should be left worse off than now, when I am merely alone and independent.

I see Irving is to play under Charles Frohman's management in Paris! This is a fine thing for Irving. The weather is damnable: we have had no summer.

Yours always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

In the early autumn of this year he was compelled to undergo two successive surgical operations and he was much weakened by pain, but he rallied, and on October 27, 1905, he began the theatrical season with his usual zeal, appearing at the Valentine Opera House, Toledo, Ohio, where, for the first time, he acted *Don Carlos*. The intolerance of the pulpit, as he had expected, immediately became vocal. A clergyman of Toledo, Rev. J. H. Muehlenbeck, led the attack, by a letter to one of the newspapers of that city, declaring himself to be

the spokesman of fifty Roman Catholic societies, of Lucas County, Ohio, and setting forth their objections to the presentment of Schiller's play. Those objections were: that "Don Carlos" is not a masterpiece; that it grossly misrepresents the facts of history; that its twofold plot is a disturbing element; that "the Princess Amelia, after it had been read to her once, never again invited Schiller to her presence" (awful penalty!); that "the illicit intimacy between *Don Carlos* and his stepmother, which, like a gangrene, sweeps through the whole drama, is historically untrue and must fill the minds of the spectators with moral poison"; and, finally, because "religious practices and doctrines are dwelt upon in such a manner as to shock Catholics, and to promote, in non-Catholics, prejudice and aversion." The fact that Mansfield had so adapted the play as to eliminate all suggestion of "illicit intimacy" and all assailment of any form of religion made that fulmination nugatory, not to say ridiculous: yet it preyed upon the actor's mind and depressed his spirit, helping to deepen his ever-growing conviction that he could expect nothing but enmity. Most persons who think about the matter at all are aware that, privately, as a custom of social gossip, more evil than good is spoken about them, but, as a rule, it is not till evil-speaking

becomes evil-printing that many persons particularly regard it.

Strange that the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an article!

So wrote the poet Byron, glancing at the fiction that a hostile review, in "The London Quarterly" was, indirectly, the cause of the death of the poet Keats. Stranger still that an actor, or indeed any artist, should allow himself to be distressed by printed pribbles and prabbles, such stuff, intrinsically, being of no more importance than the crossing of flies in the air. But so it is. "Would not a man think" (so wrote the felicitous Dr. South) "that ill deeds and shrewd turns should reach further and strike deeper than ill words? And yet many instances might be given in which men have much more easily pardoned ill things *done* than ill things *said* against them. Such a peculiar rancor and venom do they leave behind them in men's minds, and so much more poisonously and venomously does the serpent bite with his tongue than with his teeth."

If every play that is defective as to literary attributes were to be debarred from the stage, few even of the plays written by the best of dramatists would be performed. An experienced actor is, nec-

essarily, better qualified than a clergyman to determine whether a play is a dramatic masterpiece, and adapted, or adaptable, for representation. The two-fold plot of "Don Carlos" does not, and did not, prevent it from being a practicable, measurably effective drama. The facts of history have been found to be somewhat elusive, and there is no invincible ordainment making it compulsory upon the public to take a specific sectarian view of them. The Roman Catholic Church, like the Protestant Church, has dark and terrible records, distressful to every Christian reader and to all readers: dreadful deeds have been done, as all the world knows, in the name of religion: but there was not the slightest danger of arousing "prejudice and aversion" against any Church, by indicating the terrors of the old Spanish Inquisition. That subject has been used on the stage for many years, and the use of it, within proper theatrical limitations, has served only to heighten the public sense of the inestimable value of liberty of conscience. The Spanish Inquisition was a damnable iniquity and, at this late day, it would be strange to find any disinclination to call it by its right name. At the time when Schiller wrote "Don Carlos," the human race was struggling and groaning under the weight of many shackles which since have been broken. Mansfield did a good

deed when he revived Schiller's tragedy, for he gave a magnificent performance, and, not improbably, he reminded his public that freedom is a blessing to be defended as well as enjoyed.

On October 30 he appeared at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, presenting "Don Carlos." It happened to me, making the journey eastward from Southern California, through those wonderful and delightful scenes of natural pageantry that environ the Santa Fé Route across the continent, to reach that city a little while after "Don Carlos" had been produced, and to have the privilege not only of seeing a performance of it but of observing the favor with which Mansfield was hailed by the Chicago audience and the cheering critical esteem with which his acting was recorded by the Chicago press. He gained friends in the great Western capital, and, like *Othello* in Cyprus, was "well desired" there. With Schiller's tragedy as the novel feature of his repertory he traversed a considerable part of the country, and fulfilled the engagements of an uncommonly laborious season. He did not reach New York with "Don Carlos," till March 19, 1906, when he presented it at the New Amsterdam Theatre, supplementing its production with revivals of his old plays, and ended his engagement there on April 14. He then made a tour of a few

cities, including a "return engagement" in Chicago, and closed his season on May 25.

One interesting incident of his professional industry and experience, in the season of 1905-'06, was his delivery, at the Chicago University, of a discourse about the Theatre. He gave the manuscript of it to his friend Herman H. Kohlsaas, who has kindly submitted it to my inspection. A few extracts from that discourse are given here, because illustrative of his view of the duty of the Stage to Society and of the duty of Society to the Stage.

Whilst the Press, which is the voice of the public, is finding fault with the condition of the stage, it is, perhaps, forgotten that the public itself is largely responsible for this condition. When you need a fine President you elect one, and if you elect a bad one it would be your fault or the fault of a faulty machine. If you were by any chance to submit to graft in every direction, bad municipal government, insufficient regulations, bad roads, congested traffics, highway robbery and wholesale vice, who would be to blame, if you are content to sit with your hands in your laps and yell murder? There has, ever since I have had the honor and privilege of appearing before American audiences, been this same outcry against the American stage, and there has always been sufficient interest at work to make this outcry, but never sufficient interest to do anything about it, and here is a case of Talk *versus* Acting. Yet, here are some ninety millions of people, possessed of the greatest wealth of any nation in the world. It is just as easy to have a National Theatre in this country as it is in France or Germany. It is now some seven years since I attended a very delightful function in the city of Chicago, and being called

upon to make some remarks, and being totally unprepared, it occurred to me to suggest the establishment of a National Theatre. This suggestion was widely discussed, at that time, by the press and immediately after forgotten. Since then various eminent persons have stolen my thunder; but neither my thunder nor their echo of it has cleared the air, and to-day the stage of this country—as, indeed, of England—is in the same unsatisfactory condition. And so we talk, and don't act.

We need a recognized Stage and a recognized School. America has become too great and its influence abroad too large for us to afford to have recourse to that ancient and easy method of criticism which decries the American and extols the foreign. That is one of the last remnants of colonialism and provincialism, which must depart forever.

It is very evident that any man, be he an actor or no actor, can, with money and with good taste, make what is technically termed a production. There is, as an absolute matter of fact, no particular credit to be attached to the making of a production. The real work of the stage—of the actor—does not lie there. It is easy for us to busy ourselves, to pass pleasantly our time designing lovely scenes, charming costumes and all the paraphernalia and pomp of mimic grandeur, whether of landscape or of architecture, the panoply of war, or the luxury of royal courts. That is fun; pleasure and amusement. That again comes under the head of Talking *versus* Acting. No, the real work of the stage lies in the creation of a character. A great character will live forever, when paint and canvas and silks and satins and gold foil and tinsel shall have gone the way of all rags.

There is much at the present time which militates against the *education* of the actor. It has become largely the custom of theatrical companies to rely upon one play each season, or for as long a period as any play will hold the public favor. This means a few weeks of rehearsal and idleness the rest of the time. A society play, for instance, is purchased in London, a cast is engaged in New York in which each in-

dividual player peculiarly suits the character he or she has to interpret. Repetitions take place under the eye of an astute manager and the play is launched, and there is nothing to be done by the actors. The business manager and especially the press agent do the rest. Most of these plays that come to us from London are disquisitions on social topics, social problems, expositions of the author's peculiar views on matrimony or pugilism or the relations of the sexes, or a searchlight into a dark and reeking closet which nobody wants to examine. In these plays, and plays of this class, it is only necessary for the interpreter to speak the words, but there is no call for great acting and the actor is simply floated for a while upon the tide of the author's temporary notoriety. The actor should sternly put away the temptation which may come to him under the guise of financial success to produce plays which pander to debased tastes, for though, for a brief spell, he may hold the attention of the public, he will win neither respect nor lasting reward and he will openly degrade an art which should be devoted only to the beautiful.

This world was beautiful until man made it ugly, and it still remains beautiful to those who will seek its beauties. We may at once confess that there are sewers and some bad sewers. That is the truth. But because it is the truth there is no need to exhibit them upon the stage. There are other means of eradicating such evils. The stage is neither a police court nor a hospital. Both are, unfortunately, necessary to mankind, but they are not necessary upon the stage. The loftiest aim of the pulpit and the stage is to teach us to be better and consequently happier, but neither a church congregation nor a theatre audience is to be improved or should be asked to endure the distressing details of brutal, vulgar, disgusting vice.

In reply to a letter of congratulation, as to his Lecture on the Theatre, he wrote:

A BLITHE SPIRIT

297

St. James Hotel, Philadelphia,

January 23, 1906.

My Dear William Winter:—

I am glad to hear that you are disburdening yourself of some of the loads you have been carrying. We all harness ourselves to too many rickshaws. *I've* a whole string of 'em.

I don't think *my* lectures are likely to instruct anyone, but my agent, Mr. Wilstach, seemed to think them desirable, and I made the effort. *Perhaps* they are amusing. The boys seemed to be entertained.

If I can recover part of *Cyrano*, in time, I shall add it to my repertory in New York, and thus bring ten plays.

A man called on me yesterday, at the Theatre, before the play, and said he had been dispatched, by some Syndicate, to offer me \$100,000 a season, for three seasons, which I promptly declined, and, before he left, he had worked himself up to \$200,000 a season!

But I think I shall make a farewell tour and retire, and go into the steamship business, as I could then, probably, ride about the world for nothing. I have *also* noticed that the Irish whiskey, on the smaller steamers, is excellent and very cheap!

I look forward to seeing you—and let us have some fun!!!

Yours, always,

RICHARD.

To the end of his days, and notwithstanding illness, care, perplexity, and trouble, Mansfield maintained a blithe spirit and was, at times, heartily propitious to frolic. The desire to cast away responsibility, to seek adventure, to visit strange, unfre-

quented places, to do anything that would break the monotony of life,—the apparently endless routine of excitement, as he called it,—was frequently made known to me,—as in this sportive proposition to “have some fun.” Also he possessed the faculty,—one that it is not always prudent to use,—of playful satire. The French comedian, Constant Coquelin, notably one of the most self-satisfied of men, chanced to say to him: “I must always have *one* place, at least, in the course of every performance, where I can go to sleep for a few moments.” “You are lucky,” answered Mansfield, “if there is *only one* place where your audience goes to sleep.” His playfulness could be quizzical as well as tart. Once, when his business affairs were in disorder and lawsuits, brought by various actors, were pending against him, he ruminantly remarked to me: “These actors are strange persons! When they are idle, and have nothing else to do, I believe they get together and say: ‘Let’s all go and sue Mansfield!’” Speaking of another occasion, when his scenery and receipts had been attached, on a Saturday night, at a theatre in a New England town, he said to me: “My agent went running all over the place, *scratching fellows on the wrist*, to find a Free-Mason who would stand surety for us.” It sometimes pleased him to practice on the credulity of the newspaper



Courtesy of Mr. Vivian Burnett

**RICHARD MANSFIELD, MRS. MANSFIELD, AND GEORGE
GIBBS MANSFIELD**

“interviewer,” and one consequence of that prankish propensity was the publication of various ridiculous stories about him. Prior to his production of “Julius Cæsar,” for example, he imparted to an “interviewer” the impression that he intended to “double” the parts of *Brutus* and *Cæsar*, and a serious statement that such actually was his purpose appeared in print. Once, on a Staten Island ferry-boat, he was sitting near to a boy who wore a cap with three feathers in it. The child carelessly took off his cap, and, swinging it, knocked the feathers out. The actor immediately picked them up and gave them to the lad, saying, kindly: “When you are a little older, my boy, you will be *more careful of the feathers in your cap.*” The feathers in his own cap were in some peril at that time, as he had recently added to his heavy responsibilities the burden of managing the Garrick Theatre. His sportive humor is suggested (and words can only *suggest* a wag-gish, demure, gay tone, look, and manner that cannot be described) in the following letter, addressed by him to his friend Walter P. Phillips,—whom to name is to remember signal services to the science of telegraphy and distinctive, illuminative, sometimes touching sketches, written under the pen-name of *John Oakum*, relative to that science and to notable exponents of it:

104 W. 80th Street, New York,

August 12, 1896.

My Dear Phillips:—

My servant reports that there has been a pæan of "praise the Lord" that I have left the Club House. I do not wonder. I was an inconvenience and an annoyance to the servants. A more incompetent set of lying, lazy scoundrels I have never encountered. The head-waiter is a capital fellow, hard-working and most competent: the rest—the less said the better.

The bar tender complains that I did not tip him, and curses me.

To George I only gave one dollar. Also he curses me. To Ben I gave five. "Par consequence," my horse's shoes came off after leaving the stable, and Ben was not to be found to carry my luggage to the station.

The horse is here, at the Club Boarding stable, 211 West 76th Street. You can have him if you want him. He is a good horse. I do not know how to thank you for all your kindness, and, as some good always is born of evil, the pleasure of your friendship came out of the American Yacht Club House.

Pray accept Dick, the horse, as a slight souvenir from your very obliged friend,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

Walter P. Phillips, Esq.

In some respects Mansfield remained a boy to the end of his life. He was alike whimsical and mischievous in his mirth. One evening, when at the Yacht Club House, in company with Mr. Phillips, he suddenly made a sportive proposition, quite in the mood of a heedless boy: "Let us," he said, "steal that brass cannon down there on the pier, and go after those fellows at Larchmont. We'll

call on them to surrender, and, if they don't, we'll fire off the cannon: and if that doesn't fetch 'em—why, I'll go up on the bow and *sing!*" Pompous affectation annoyed him. At Narragansett, one summer, there was a particularly absurd specimen of the self-sufficient ass, locally called "Mr. Dombey." Mansfield, one afternoon, while swimming, perceived that ridiculous person posing on the club "float," and immediately was seized with an agonizing cramp which caused him, suddenly and frantically, to grasp the edge of the float with such force that, being very strong, he precipitated "Mr. Dombey" into the sea; after which catastrophe the cramp at once subsided. When acting *Brutus* he habitually made an error of emphasis in one line,—“All the charactery of my sad brows,”—placing the accent, in the word “charactery,” on the first syllable, and I ventured to direct his attention to the fact that, in this case, the accent should fall on the second syllable: whereupon he wrote: “I am very proud of your praise and thank you for it. I said charáctery last evening, and there was much commotion in the audience—two women screamed and a man fainted!” Another example of his pleasantry was afforded, on the occasion of a dinner party, at his dwelling in New York, when he resided in 80th Street. The time was nearly summer and the weather sultry.

"Come," he gravely said; "let us all go and sit on the steps of the house—they are stone and cool—and have dinner served there—and send word to 'The Herald' that Mansfield's mannerisms have broken out in a new place." He was in earnest, for a moment, yet later he became obviously vexed that any of his guests—all of whom were friends,—should have thought him to be so.

Detroit, February 19, 1906.

My Dear Winter:—

I have just received an invitation to attend a banquet here, from the Board of Commerce, and to speak! Secretary Taft and others are the guests! As the *banquet* is at 8 o'clock, and I play *Don Carlos*, I do not see how I can make the two ends meet—but I wish I could go and talk a little about various things: there would be *trouble*!

When I am in New York I hope you will *try* to spend *some* evening with me.

Our business is wonderful. In Pittsburgh, against Mme. Bernhardt, \$17,000. In Cleveland, against Mrs. Fiske, \$16,000. Here the sale is very large. They want me to go to Paris, in the spring of 1907. What do *you* think about it? I should like to go—but they will rob me, of course. I should play a repertory, and open with *Ivan*. Hein?

Always yours,

RICHARD.

X.

1906 TO 1907.

IN the spring of 1906 he made known his intention of retiring from the stage, after three years more of professional exertion. The clouds had begun to gather. He was growing weary of the long struggle, jaded in mind and body, and dissatisfied with the result of his efforts. The successive deaths of Jefferson and Irving,—the former on April 23, the latter on October 13, 1905,—had elicited numerous tributes, not only of admiration but of affection; and it seems not improbable that, pondering on those past careers and on the eulogies of those actors, when their ears were “stopped with dust,” he reflected on the emptiness of fame, and surmised that, perhaps, notwithstanding all his earnest labor in the cause of art, and all his ardent longing for human sympathy, he had fallen short of the fulfilment of his ambition and failed to win the public heart. Some such feeling seems to glimmer through these words, that he wrote to me, about that time,—the settled despondency that caused him, not very long afterward, under the desolate apprehension of

fatal illness, to say to his wife, "If it were not for you and the boy, I should not care how soon it ended."

I am working because it is preferable to being idle; but I have very little to work for. I do not care for money, and *the recognition I hoped for is denied me*. I shall keep on, and do my duty as I see it—simply, honestly, and unaffectedly. I think Irving's end was very enviable. It was best so, and is always best so.

As for the rest—nothing matters. Life is a farce—an absurd farce, and the world is full of humbugs. As I say, nothing at all matters—there is only Nature, and that is ever beautiful. Treat everything as a passing show—decide upon being well and jolly and happy, and you *will* be! Let us have some good times and be young again, Damme! Always your old friend,

RICHARD.

Hotel Jefferson, St. Louis,

April 30, 1906.

My Dear Winter:—

I have been so tired, and ill, and nervous, that it has been impossible for me to accomplish anything but the actual task at night. The season in New York—the constant strain and the sudden warm weather (in Cincinnati it was beyond description, dirty, muggy, heavy and enervating!), all had its effect upon my spirits.

There seems to have sprung up a new-born antagonism that is venting itself in all kinds of ways—Magazine articles; and, in every review of the plays I present, my mannerisms, my "this, that, and the other," are commented upon, and I begin to doubt, and wonder whether I *am* the dreadful charlatan they say I am.

I recently refused from the Messrs. Shubert a check for \$50,000, to sign a contract with them, for three years, to play at *their* theatres. The fact is that one syndicate is as bad as another, and as, *now*, I am *absolutely independent*, and free to play when and wherever I please, I do not care to sell my Liberty to these Jews—who would find some way of quarrelling with me, and then sue me for the return of the fifty thousand.

Your beautiful souvenir of the N. Y. season reached me, at one of the cities, and touched my heart. I do not know how to thank you for it. I think I will have it printed—but I should like you, if you can spare the time, to look up other articles concerning me—written from the commencement of my career in America, and if you would send them to me I will have them all reproduced in one book.

Also I wonder if you would care to undertake a Biography? It might interest some people, and much in my early life was strange; it should prove entertaining.

A pity that you have to go to California. I would give you a little cottage, all to yourself, at New London, where you would be very comfortable and absolutely free: it contains a sitting-room, bed-room, and bath-room, and it is surrounded by flowers: there is a porch, with seats: the only time that you would be disturbed would be when you joined our party at meals. Think it over!

I think an entertaining book on the Life of R. M. from your pen might sell well—I do not know; but I think so.

I am here for this week. Next week at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, and then, please God—home to New London! I am counting the minutes! with love,

Your,
R. M.

In reply I told him that I had already planned and begun to write the narrative of his life,

intending to make it a companion of my Biographies already published, of my old friends, Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson. This is his response:

415 Elm Street, Chicago,
May 17, 1906.

My Dear Winter:—

I am tremendously excited about your writing the Life of R. M. *It is better than being knighted!* But—there is so much to tell—the early life abroad—I mean my childhood—the years at Jena—the struggles in London, etc., etc., etc. This can only be *told*, in the long evenings at home—I can't write it: I can tell it to you, and *you* can paint it.

If I am alive next year I propose to invite you to go abroad with me. We will travel over the ground together; foot for foot: all the places I lived in, and was beaten and starved—my grandfather's vineyard—he was the friend of poets—my old Aunt, still living,—a Grand Lady; the school at Yverdon: at Bourbourg; Derby—Oh, well, it will be great and glorious!—

But you *must not* work so hard. Next year you *must* go away with me! If only, dear old fellow, you were coming to us at New London, for the summer! You could have no painful memories, in the rose cottage in which I would install you! But you would have quiet and rest, and, I hope, complete immunity from care.

I am greatly alarmed about the Pennsylvania R. R., in which I have a very large sum of money invested. It looks as if we were to have revelations there, too! The great contempt that fat, money-making business men have always manifested for poor damned devils of writers, and artists generally, is about to meet its Nemesis.

Whenever I play *Shylock* I think of him as the wretched artist and scribbler—snubbed, spat upon, and kicked; and *An-*

tonio, the "smug" *Antonio!*, is all the fat, bald-headed, wheezing, canting, Bank-Presidents, and Railroad Magnates, and Oleomargarine Manufacturers I have encountered, during my many years of dwelling in a cuspidor, boiled into one. You can, therefore, imagine how anxious I always feel to slice rashers off him!

I want to talk to you about my plans for next year. Something must be done. Since I have set the pace in *repertory*, all the small fry have come tumbling after—and Mr. ——— is having full-lengths painted of himself as *Hamlet* (evidently the *Ghost* has had an encounter with a polecat, for *Hamlet* seems to notice a disagreeable odor), *Shylock* (tonsorial), *Malvolio*, *Romeo* (after the most approved model), etc., etc., etc., I want something sweet and dear and lovely. No more Beasts! But, no one writes anything! Everything is a pose and a fad.

I leave here on Monday morning, and I shall be in Milwaukee on the 22nd, and 23rd. On Sunday 27th, I shall, please God! reach home—New London. Would it not be possible for you to spend at least a week with me, there, before you go to California?

Yours always,

RICHARD.

The time was now drawing near when all Mansfield's toil was to be set at naught, when all his ambitious striving and noble achievement was to come to an end, not as he had dreamed and hoped, in peaceful retirement from the active world, but in one black fatality of disappointment, and in protracted suffering and premature death. The victory, indeed, had been gained, in so far as public admiration can be called victory. Fame had been

established. Wealth had been accumulated. On both sides of the Atlantic the name of Richard Mansfield was known and honored. London was open to him, had he chosen to revisit that capital. He was asked to appear at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, in Paris, and he was inclined to do so, for, not unnaturally, the thought of a brilliant farewell season on the European stage would sometimes come into his mind. He had, however, determined that there should be a limit to his prodigious toil, and he remained resolute in his determination. He would begin the year 1910 as a private man, and the Stage should see him no more. But the release had been too long delayed and even the thought of relief had come too late. In the summer and autumn of 1906 the effects of sickness and weariness became more and more evident in his conduct and in his letters. He suffered much from dyspepsia and disorder of the liver, and his nervous system was completely shattered. The burdens imposed on him were many and heavy, and his mind was continually troubled with anxiety about the future. His letters to me revealed an ever-deepening melancholy and almost hourly fluctuations of feeling and changes of plan. A sense of isolation and loneliness, long familiar to him, seemed to color all his thoughts. He brooded much upon the troubles of life, and,



RICHARD MANSFIELD

Courtesy of Mr. Virian Burnett

at times, convinced himself that he was universally misunderstood and disliked. The imperative necessity of shaping a course for the new theatrical season was ever present in his consciousness, to agitate and perplex him. He had asked for my counsel,—as for many years had been his custom,—and I had given it; advising him to augment his Shakespearean repertory by acting *King John*, or by producing “Henry the Fourth” and then “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” and acting *Falstaff*. No actor possessed of such a fine intellect and such abundance of rich humor has attempted *Falstaff* on our stage within the last fifty years. At first the plan seemed to interest him, but he soon became indifferent to it, and eventually rejected it. The idea had become persuasive in his belief that practical success on the stage could be obtained only by striking out a new path, by showing odd and strange spectacles, and by being singular. It was essential that his new season should prove largely remunerative, for he had assumed various exacting personal obligations, had engaged a numerous and expensive theatrical company, and had bound himself by contract to act in various places and for various periods; and, knowing that much money would be needed, with which to fulfil all his promises and duties, he reasoned that the safe course would be that of

extreme, emphatic eccentricity. It was a mistake, and it proved a fatal one. The choice that he made, probably under injudicious advisement, was that of recourse to one of the most bizarre and wearisome fads of the period, the lugubrious, murky, tedious Henrik Ibsen, a writer with whose works, according to his repeated assurance, he had little or no sympathy. The play that he selected was "Peer Gynt,"—one of the least obnoxious of the Norwegian dramatist's pessimistic ebullitions, but, for the stage, a hopeless tangle of fantasy and obscurity, such as he never would have chosen if his mind had not been clouded by sickness and morbid dejection,—and, having selected "Peer Gynt," his next movement was to request me, very earnestly, to "read it through, three times," and to make a stage version of it, for his use. I was anxious about him, and deeply desirous that he should succeed, but I could not approve of his project, and I declined association with it. The Ibsen movement which, in America, began in 18—, with the late Helena Modjeska's introduction of "A Doll's House," under the name of "Thora," and which has purled along, ever since, in a sickly and more or less obscure way, impressed me, from the beginning, as unhealthful and injurious. The province of art, and especially of dramatic art, is

beauty, not deformity; the need of the world is to be cheered, not depressed; and an author who avows, as Ibsen did, that he goes down into the sewers,—whatever be the purpose of his descent into those insalubrious regions,—should be left to the enjoyment of them. Each to his taste. The colloquies written by Ibsen are, variously, mawkish, morose, and tainted, and that author, proclaimed as an artist in drama or a sound leader of thought, is a grotesque absurdity. The letter that I wrote to Mansfield on that occasion, together with his reply, will serve to illustrate this subject and these statements:

The Grange, New London,
August 14, 1906.

My Dear Winter:—

I have been trying to rest and also trying to find a cure for the stubborn and chronic dyspepsia that is torturing me—so far without success. Also, we have cast about in every direction for something to do next season. In view of the number of companies now presenting fifty cent Shakespeare, we have had to abandon any idea in that direction, and the old plays that were popular once are not for now. It has to be something extraordinary; something new and quite out of the common! Where to find it?!! Also—I am not satisfied or interested in ordinary things.

I have finally decided upon "Peer Gynt." I know you do not like Ibsen, and, in the main, *I* do not. But no man, no poet of late years, has written anything quite as fine as "Peer Gynt." The more I study it the more convinced I am that

it is a most remarkable work. Full of beautiful thought; full of pathos and sorrow,—the eternal heritage of man,—in the first acts. In the latter, satire, playful humor, and, finally, great sadness. Will you read it, and re-read it, carefully and thoughtfully? I am going to do it—if possible *wonderfully*. I shall need your help. Can't you come to me here, at least for *a week*? The place is so changed you will not remember the Edwin Booth days at all, and you will be comfortable and happy. I want to arrange the play *with* you. There is no one but *you* to help me. Come?!!

Your,
R. M.

Mentone, California,
August 19, 1906.

My Dear Mansfield:—

I do not think that you should abandon Shakespeare because other actors are trying to present his plays and are not presenting them well. You could win another laurel with *King John* or with *Falstaff*. However, it is, probably, useless for me to descant on that subject.

As to Ibsen—I think you are possessed of *my* opinion. I have read many of his plays, and I have seen several of them on the stage. He was a man of talent, but narrow, morbid, dismal, depressing, and sometimes nasty. He says nothing that has not been better said by earlier and better writers. I cannot conceive of any circumstances under which I would contribute in any way, directly or indirectly, to aid or favor the Ibsen movement. I am earnestly and deeply desirous to promote your welfare and happiness, and as long as I am writing I shall write thoughtfully, justly, and kindly about your acting; but if you go into the Ibsen business you must go without me. I will not touch "Peer Gynt" or anything else from Ibsen's pen.

Faithfully yours,
WILLIAM WINTER.

The Grange, New London, Conn.

August 27, 1906.

MY DEAR WINTER:—

I am in receipt of your letter. The reason I did not communicate with you was that I have been very ill again, with nervous dyspepsia, and have suffered so keenly that I could not write to any one or think reasonably of anything. I was in great despondency and misery for weeks. I have two families to support in America, and four families in Europe, and I have to think very hard, and work very hard, to make the necessary income. I do not expect or ask for any assistance from any one. I am glad to be of service to my friends, and all I ask is their friendship. I am generally alone, and I have to do what seems most likely to support, becomingly, those who are dependent on me.

There is a plethora of Shakespearean productions this year, and there is a faddish, restless spirit in the air. Ordinary things will not draw. I do not love Ibsen,—but something novel and extraordinary has to be found. I propose playing "Peer Gynt" in a spirit of travesty, and to present it as a "phantasmagoria." I shall leave it to the people to find out the fun. At present there is nothing else in sight. I may, however, find something. I would, of course, prefer Jonson, or Beaumont and Fletcher. These are hard times for us, and in doing "Peer Gynt" I am simply,—as I did in "Cyrano,"—working for the sinews of war, in order to accomplish other and better things. Also I want to hoist the Ibsen craze with its own petard. If "Peer Gynt" doesn't do it, nothing will! Mrs. Mansfield is absolutely adamant about *Falstaff*, and will not countenance it.

There is hardly a play,—a great play,—that has not some objectionable features. Of course, everybody is weary to death of the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Mrs. Tanqueray and the connubial noodle, and you can't very well write a play on any historical subject without running against some dirt, whether it be Louis XIV., or Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI., or

Charles I., or Charles II., or Henry VIII.; and you can't present the plays of Shakespeare without getting into trouble. When, for instance, I read your advice concerning *Falstaff* to my wife, she said to me: "If you ever appear as that disgusting old man, and speak those horrid lines, I will never look at you again!" But what's the use of talking?

In *King John* there is nothing for *me*, and the whole summer I have worried and thought—but can find naught. My company is enormous. My contracts are signed. I have to play five weeks in Chicago, commencing the last day in October. We closed there late in the spring, with the repertory. I have a charming play, on "L'Ami Fritz," by Erckmann-Chatrian, that I shall do later, but it would not fill the house for five weeks.

Last season "Don Carlos" only drew for a night or two; Molière in Boston one performance, only half a house! I am forced to do odd and extraordinary stuff, to keep the pot boiling. *No one* is writing anything. There is not a Dramatic Author in sight! No one comes near me. I am entirely alone. Every manager and actor in the country is ready to cut my throat. If my receipts decline I am lost. I am forced to fight with the weapons I can find.

I am sorry to offend you, or to do anything to lessen or impair our long friendship, and that is why I write at length, so that you may understand my position. I am trying to sell the property here and in New York, and to buy a little place in England, and retire from a conflict that becomes more and more hopeless. I have worked so hard that I have practically destroyed my nervous force, and I cannot recuperate or get completely well, under the constant strain. God bless *you*. I know how hard you are working, but I feel you do not quite comprehend how deeply and sincerely I sympathize with you. In fact, I do not suppose anybody realizes how much I long for that friendship and affection and regard which is denied me.

Yours as always,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

That letter, obviously the emanation of a careworn mind, was soon followed by another, still more expressive of perplexity and dejection, and, only because I had, by reason of sudden, imperative professional duty, been compelled to break an engagement to dine with him, bidding me "a long farewell" and conveying the assurance that I should never hear from him again.

"I think," he added, "perhaps you may be under the impression that I care what the papers say about me. I do not. I very rarely read them, and as they have consistently abused me, for many years, whenever there was the slightest opportunity, I have long ago ceased to bother my head about them. I am for an island and solitude, and I do not care two pennies about the Stage or the Drama—I'm utterly sick of it. As for Friendship, it seems no longer to exist."

As I had always counselled him not to read newspaper articles about his acting or himself I was under no impression that he ought to be solicitous as to those publications, and should have been very glad to believe the assurance that he had ceased to regard them. Once I sent to him a motto which I had read, graved in the stone over an old English fireplace: "They have said and they will say: Let them be saying!" But, customarily, he worried about newspaper commentaries,—although, in latter years, his devoted wife wisely and firmly protested against his reading them and,

as far as possible, kept such screeds from his knowledge.

I knew and valued Mansfield far too well to take offence at his whims, and a line of friendly explanation immediately elicited a letter as affectionate as its predecessor had been splenetic. We soon met, his purposed venture with the Ibsen Drama was discussed, and, finding him committed to that experiment, from which I would gladly have dissuaded him, all was said that could be said to cheer him. Seldom has there been, in public life, a being so sensitive to opinion, so susceptible of being pained, or to whom encouragement was so vitally essential, and seldom has there been a being who veiled his sensibility under such an austere guise of cold indifference.

On October 29, 1906, at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, Mansfield began his last theatrical season, producing the play of "Peer Gynt," which then had its first representation in America. As a curiosity it was received with attention, and as the venture of an admirable and much-admired actor it was viewed with kindness and recorded with respect; but it soon languished and, before leaving Chicago, he was constrained to re-enforce it with his repertory. The effort to act *Peer Gynt* in such a way as to make the part effective had, meanwhile, depleted

"A SOP TO CERBERUS" 317

his strength, and he became so ill that he was obliged to take a recess and come home for a week of rest. He ceased acting, February 16, at Philadelphia, and came to New York.

316 Riverside Drive, New York,

February 18, 1907.

My Dear Winter:—

This will be my one and only Ibsen venture, and I have no intention of going any farther in that direction. The greater part of it is good,—written when Ibsen was less Ibsen than he became later. When we meet, which I hope may be soon, I would like to talk things over with you and discuss what had best be done; in the meanwhile, I have presented this "sop to Cerberus," and I have sugar-coated it and put laughing gas into it, so that the operation may be painless.

The very unfortunate part of the actor's work is that he *must* make people come and see him act; if they don't come, it's no use acting: and every year, that more and more difficult question confronts me.

I don't like Sardou: I don't think that Irving did, but he actually produced "Mme. Sans-Gené." That was *his* sop to Cerberus, eh? It was the same old story—and it is!

"O, for a play!"

I don't like Ibsen—but I think "Peer Gynt" is better than "Mme. Sans-Gené."

I have an *important* offer, *very*. I shall want to talk to you about it. When will you be here? Sunday? My love to you all!

I shall be happy when *this* season is over. The work is too hard:

O, for a cottage,
A cottage for me!
Embowered in roses,
And fanned by the sea!

A little thing of my own! Come soon, and see what remains of your friend *Wilkins*.

Yours as ever,

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

On February 25, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, he began, in New York, the engagement that was to prove his last. It covered a period of four weeks. The opening play was "*Peer Gynt*," to which a chapter is devoted in the second volume of this biography. That play was performed for three weeks, after which time Mansfield heeded his doctor's warning, and changed the bill. Later he was seen as *Dimmesdale*, *Brummell*, *Chevrial*, and *Jekyll* and *Hyde*. At this time I had commended to his attention a short play, of remarkable power, called "*The Goal*," by that fine dramatist, Henry Arthur Jones,—thinking it might, perhaps, be obtained for his use, and made practicable in association with a light comedy. To this suggestion he answered:

316 Riverside Drive, New York,
March 8, 1907.

Dear Old Friend:—

I have been greatly depressed and very wretched, but I am better to-day. The strain of playing *Peer Gynt* was too great. I am returning you the little play of Jones's, because I never produce one act plays, for the reason that no one ever comes to see them, and they necessitate the doing of two other plays on the same evening.



Photograph by Byron

MR. AND MRS. MANSFIELD IN THE GARDEN, AT "THE GRANGE"

When we meet I hope to tell you of my plans. I *must* make some money and get out. I see that actors with a small play and a small cast can make a million: I must try it. We, alas, are comparatively poor, and if we had to live, to-morrow, on what we have, our income would be very small.

Try to come next Sunday. I will send the motor to meet you, if you like. By the way, B. would not allow me to read the reviews of "Peer," but *now* I *have* seen *your* article: it was as generous and as kindly as you *could* make it, holding the views you do (with which, *entre nous*, I agree, but B., and others do not). No more Ibsen! Still, of course, since I have made the venture, I wanted it to be successful.

Yours as ever,

R. M.

A little later, and while the Ibsen play was still current (it was withdrawn on March 16), he wrote the following letter,—the last piece of writing that I ever received from him, and inexpressibly precious to me, as a token that his esteem and affection had survived every trial, and that I had only done him justice in always telling him what I believed to be the truth.

316 Riverside Drive, New York.

My Dear Old Friend:—

You are ever true, and, as B. said this morning, "the only man with the courage of his opinions!" Thank God for You! I do hope we shall see you on Sunday, and we will confer! *Is* there anything in the world I can do for You?

As always,

R. M.

At the time when Mansfield produced "Peer Gynt" he was favored with some newspaper censure, on the ground that he had "desecrated" Ibsen, by omitting portions of that writer's "Poem." There is no desecration involved in the rejection of nonsense, and the fact is that the actor retained, in his stage-version of "Peer Gynt," every shred of the original that could be made effective in a theatrical performance, as well as much that could not. The scenes that pass in a mad-house were discarded, but as many auditors, on hearing the play, felt that they had strayed into one, those "poetic" gems could not have been seriously missed. Mansfield did everything that zeal could prompt or ingenuity and labor accomplish to exploit a radically undramatic and dismally obscure composition, and he bore, in the manifestation of it, one of the heaviest burdens ever assumed by an actor. There is, in the writings of Ibsen, an intellectual value that is perfectly well known and has been clearly designated. He is a didactic writer, who announces that human nature is vile and human society corrupt. But his compositions are not dramatic, and, even if they were, they would not be desirable on the stage, because their teaching is, in general, false, they are often offensive to good taste, and they are wearisome and depressing. It was unfortunate for Mansfield that he was

ever persuaded to resort to the Ibsen fad. He considered, however, that it was "in the air." Persons in London calling themselves "Souls" had propagated it, and persons in New York and Boston, imitative of those "Souls," had imported it; and so he felt that it must be tried. Hence his production of "Peer Gynt." In the light of what is now known we know that he was already doomed: but there can be no doubt that the tremendous effort which he made to vitalize the part of *Peer Gynt*, to make it natural, intelligible, and dramatically effective, and thus to interest and hold the public and to win a splendid success, accelerated the progress of his disease and precipitated the catastrophe of his death.

The last days of Mansfield were inexpressibly afflicting and sorrowful. On March 23, at an afternoon performance, he acted *Peer Gynt*, and in the evening of that day he acted *Baron Chevrial*. In both performances it was evident that he was suffering, and when, after the death-scene of *Chevrial*, he came before the curtain, responding to a tumultuous call for a speech, he was so weak that he could hardly stand. His voice faltered, but he made a brave effort and spoke very earnestly and sweetly, thanking the audience and the general public for kindness, alluding to certain aspersions which had

been cast upon him in some of the local newspapers, and expressing regret that evil should have been spoken of him, and that it should have been credited only because it had been spoken. Those were the last words he ever said upon the stage. For a moment he gazed upon the multitude then standing before him,—for the house had risen,—bowed slightly, the expression of his countenance being very sad, and slowly withdrew. On the next day, March 24, he went to Scranton, Pa., where he was to act on the night of March 25, but his sickness increased and the physician called to attend him forbade him to appear. He expected to act on the next evening, but was not able to do so, and he was then immediately brought back to New York, and all his theatrical engagements were presently cancelled, it being clearly manifest that he could not fulfil them. During several weeks he remained in his house, 316 Riverside Drive, under medical care. His condition underwent many changes; his suffering at times was great; but slowly he gained a little strength. He had for some time been determined on a journey to England. His passage was engaged for May 4, but he was not able to sail. I saw him on the morning of May 11. “I told them I would see *you*, Willy,” he said, “even if I were dying.” We sat together for some



Photograph by Pach Bros.

RICHARD MANSFIELD

At His Home, 316 Riverside Drive, New York

time. He did not speak much, nor could I speak much to him. It seemed best that we should both pretend to believe that he would soon be well, but I knew that I should never see him again. When he did speak it was little more than a murmured word or two. His mind was busy with the past. Several times he mentioned Jefferson and his paintings. "Studies in green they are," he said. Once he spoke aloud to himself: "I have not lived a bad life." Presently I rose to go and clasped his hand and said good-by. At the door I turned to look at him once more. He was sitting huddled in his chair; his figure was much emaciated; his clothes hung loosely about him; his face was pale and very wretched in expression, and I saw, in his eyes, as he looked at me, that he knew our parting was forever. I went back and kissed his forehead and pressed his hand and so came away. We never met again. Since then I have stood beside his grave. Life seems to be chiefly made up of farewells like that and memories like these.

On May 12, aboard the *Minneapolis*, he sailed for London. When ill he had always wished to be alone, if possible, and it had been arranged, at his positive insistence, that Mrs. Mansfield and their son should follow him aboard a steamer sailing a week later. He was accompanied by two attendants.

On arriving in England he went to Brighton, with his elder brother, Felix. There, within a few days, he was joined by his wife and boy. A little later he was moved to a pleasant country house, Moonhill, Cuckfield, in the lovely county of Sussex. He had hoped for benefit to his health, from the Atlantic voyage and from the restful influence of the English rural environment, which he loved, but the hope was bitterly disappointed. The weather was coarse and chill, and he grew steadily worse. His condition was, indeed, wretched, and, looking back to that time, it now seems probable that his physicians only acceded to his desire to go abroad because they knew that, whether abroad or at home, he was beyond the reach of mortal aid. To a friend who visited him at Moonhill he said that "all had been done that was possible" and he knew the end was inevitable. He now insisted on an immediate return to America, and in July he sailed, aboard the *Virginia*, with Mrs. Mansfield and their boy and his brother Felix. On July 26 they landed at Montreal, from which city he was conveyed, by special train, to Ampersand, Lake Saranac, where he remained for a short time, pending the completion of alterations in a house called "Seven Acres," one of the three houses which he owned, in Ocean Ave-

nue, New London, Conn. His favorite residence there was "The Grange," where "he had everything as he wanted it," but that house, unfortunately, had been leased. "Seven Acres," being empty, had been converted from a farmhouse into a cosy, rambling, cheerful dwelling, and it pleased him much. In that cottage he was installed on August 22. On his arrival there he appeared to rally a little,—the flame of life leaping up, as it sometimes will, before it is extinguished,—but his endurance was almost at an end. His immediate death, however, was not expected by his family. In the early hours of Friday, August 30, there came a change. He was alone, except for a nurse, who presently came to Mrs. Mansfield, who was waiting at his bedroom door. "His pulse is very weak," the nurse said. His wife went to him, took his hand, and knelt beside him, repeating the words "God is life." He was conscious and knew her; presently he drew her toward him and kissed her, and, as he lay back, he smiled. "God is life," she whispered. "God is love," he said, very slowly, and with those words upon his lips he sank into a lethargy and knew no more. The end was long in coming, but the real end came as he spoke. At forty minutes past six o'clock he ceased to breathe. He was in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

The funeral and burial of Mansfield occurred on Monday, September 2, at noon. He had requested that the ceremony should be simple, and his wish was fulfilled. The Episcopal service for the burial of the dead was read by the rector of St. James's Church, New London, Rev. Dr. Alfred Pool Grant, who also delivered a brief eulogy of the deceased actor. Those rites were performed in the house of "Seven Acres," in the room that had been destined as Mansfield's study. The day was one of storm, and a heavy rain was falling when the funeral procession moved from the house to the cemetery. The body, in a plain black coffin, was borne by eight persons, members of the police of New London. The nominal pall-bearers, who walked behind the coffin, were Commodore John Parker, U.S.N., Colonel A. C. Tyler, Mr. Benjamin L. Stevens, Mr. Paul Wilstach, Mr. Robert Appleton, Mr. Rutger Jewett, Dr. William Appleton, and Mr. Roland P. Keasby. The widow and Felix Mansfield, brother of the deceased, followed the bearers, and were in turn followed by other mourners. The committal service was read at the grave, Newman's hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light," was sung, by a quartette, and the coffin was lowered into a steel vault. All persons then left the cemetery, except Mrs. Mansfield, who remained for some time, kneeling,

in prayer, beside the open vault, which had been heavily lined with hemlock boughs and many-colored hydrangeas. The vault was then sealed and covered with earth and sods. The grave of Mansfield is in a secluded corner of a little cemetery situated almost opposite to the house in which he died, and visible from it. Hedges of evergreen encompass the square of earth in which his ashes rest, and over it the sea-breeze whispers in the trees, and round it all is peace.

Mansfield was conscious of the possession of great natural powers. He loved every form of Art. He worshipped Beauty. He longed to *express* himself. He earnestly desired to win eminence and to exercise a beneficial influence upon society. Looking abroad upon the community he saw that distinction, wealth, and power were possessed by many persons of inferior ability, and he resented that injustice and became intolerant of it. He did not know, or he did not consider,—as, for his good, he might have done,—that mediocrity is often more immediately and largely prosperous than genius is, because, by the multitude, it is more easily understood. In his professional life he continually observed the proceedings of other actors, and he

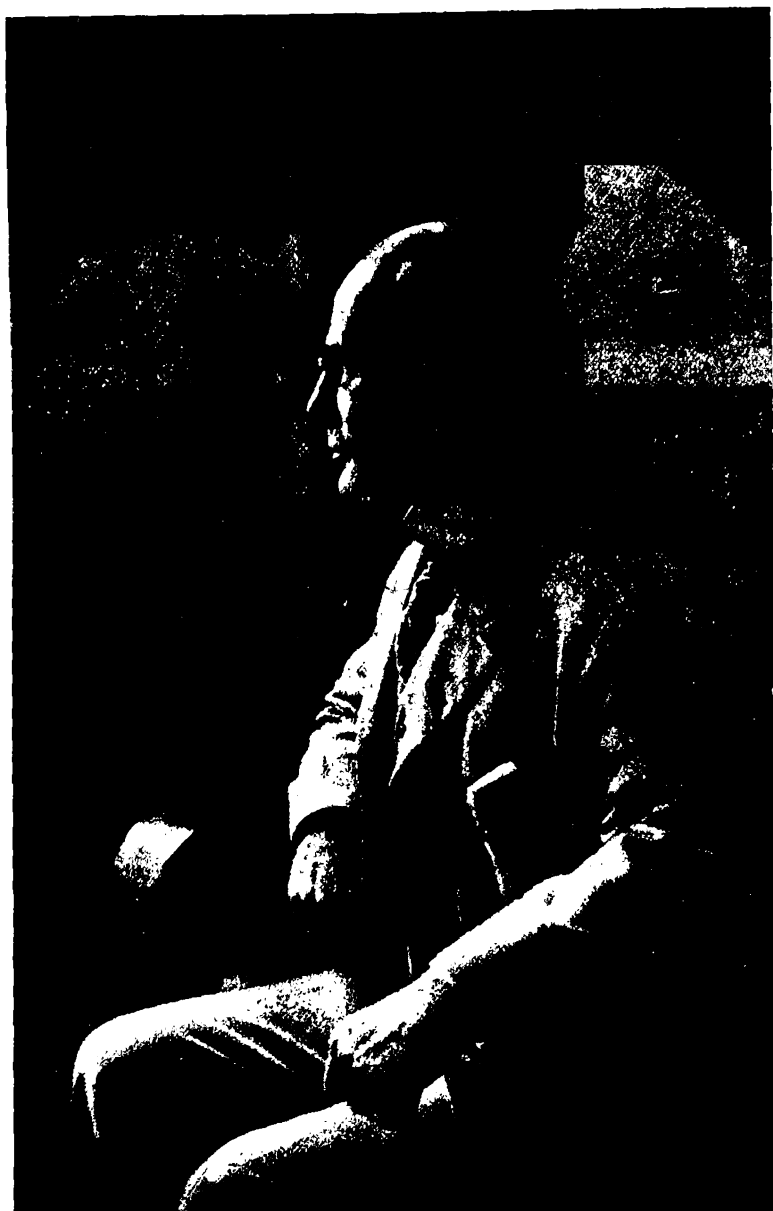
was troubled by those proceedings and irritated by the public recognition accorded to them. He also allowed himself to be annoyed by the frivolous prattle of newspapers. He lacked entire self-possession. That was a weakness of his character, from which, and from latent disease, ensued the aberrations of his conduct, his irritability, his jealousies, his flurries of anger, his petulant outbreaks of speech, and his morbid fancies as to the defection of friends and the hostility of the world. If only he could have ceased to worry about the doings and sayings of others, he would have escaped much suffering. Often, in my intimate observance of him, I had reason to regret,—and more than once I told him so,—that he would not, or could not, feel and exemplify the truth of the thought contained in Arnold's lines:

And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long, moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

The propensity to fret because artistic competitors are popular has shown itself in the lives of many actors. Garrick seems to have been acutely sensitive on that point. Cooke, speaking of Kemble, signified that he would "make Black Jack tremble

in his boots!" Macready loved "no brother near the throne." When Charles Kean lost a jewel, which had been given to him by Queen Victoria, Douglas Jerrold significantly remarked that he would find it "sticking in Macready's crop." The jealous animosity of Edwin Forrest toward Macready is well remembered. Aside from professional rivalry,—or, perhaps, because of it, and of consequent inability to see clearly and judge fairly,—actors seldom form judicious views of each other. E. L. Davenport, a giant in his day, thought that Edwin Booth was a "divine" *reader* of *Hamlet*, but not a great *actor*. Edwin Booth did not very highly esteem Jefferson's selection of *Rip Van Winkle*,—so he said to me; and of John S. Clarke, his brother-in-law, whom he greatly liked, and who was a superb eccentric comedian, he said: "Clarke is exceedingly amusing in private life, but, to me, not at all so on the stage." Henry Irving, who admired Jefferson more than he did any other American actor, declared Jefferson's embodiment of *Acres* to be his best performance, and superior to that of *Rip Van Winkle*,—which certainly it was not, for the reason that *Rip* had imagination and poetry in it, while *Acres* was made up exclusively of character and humor; and, although the felicity of dramatic expression was superb in *Acres*, it was

transcended by that of *Rip*. Lester Wallack, next to Charles Mathews, the best light comedian of the period immediately succeeding that of Charles Kemble and James E. Murdoch, could not perceive exceptional merit in the acting of Jefferson, for in conversation with me he lightly dismissed him as a man with a "funny little squeaky voice." Edwin Booth said to me that Irving's impersonation of *Louis the Eleventh* was decidedly inferior to the performance of the same part by Charles Kean,—an actor of remarkable ability, but one who, whether in *Louis* or in any other character, and I saw him in that and in many, neither rose to the intellectual height of Irving nor rivalled him in the faculty of dramatic expression; and of Irving's performance of *Mathias*, in "The Bells," which Booth saw before I did, the most he could tell me was that it had "a lot of red silk pocket-handkerchief in it." Irving, much as he esteemed Edwin Booth as a man, considered him to be more an *elocutionist* than an actor,—meaning an *impersonator*: "he is a magnificent reader," said Irving. Jefferson, who seldom allowed himself to be disturbed by the renown of rival actors, nevertheless thought and said that he could have excelled Irving in the part of *Doctor Primrose*, in Wills's lovely play of "Olivia," whereas, in fact, he could not have approached him, for in that part, as



Courtesy of Mr. Vivian Burnett

RICHARD MANSFIELD IN 1906

in *Mathias*, *Mephistopheles*, *Lesurques*, *Dubosc*, *Becket*, and *Charles the First*, Irving was unique and perfect. But Jefferson, whose knowledge of the art of acting was comprehensive, minute, and extraordinary, sometimes spoke from impulse rather than from judgment. "All Irving's performances," he once said, "are *exactly alike*, and show exactly the same man;" and then, almost immediately, he added, referring to Irving's acting in "The Lyons Mail," "*not even a child could possibly mistake the one man, Dubosc, for the other, Lesurques*"! Still another of his pronouncements was that the performance of *Mephistopheles* by Edouard de Reszke, in the opera of "Faust," was vastly better than that of Irving, in Wills's drama. De Reszke, in fact, presented *Mephistopheles* as a fat, rubicund, jovial roisterer, whereas Irving acted him as a *Spirit*, the incarnation of intellectual pride, scorn, and grimly humorous denial and mockery, sardonic and terrible. Mansfield's views of other actors were equally capricious. It would be a sad day for the players if their performances were to be criticised in the press by their brethren of the dramatic profession.

Mansfield has been described, by various performers with whom, professionally, he came into contact, sometimes as affable and kind, sometimes

as unreasonable, tyrannical, and offensive. That testimony, both ways, is authentic. He could be, and often he was, genial, sympathetic, considerate, and benign. He also could be, and sometimes he was, ungracious, sarcastic, bitter, and rude. The son of Erminia Rudersdorff could hardly have been anything but capricious; and it should also be remembered that Mansfield, although a man of robust physique, was not in perfect health, that he often suffered from distressing nervous illness, that much of his life was passed under an exceptionally severe strain of anxiety and responsibility, and that his patience was often severely tried by ingratitude, injustice, malice, and misrepresentation. In ill-tempered moods he was injudicious, and the vagaries of his conduct and speech furnished weapons with which resentment or detraction could, and did, strike. But there was a charming side to his character. He was an affectionate friend, a delightful companion, and in the abodes of want and sorrow he was the soul of generosity and cheer.

A man of complex and original character and genius is seldom understood and deeply appreciated by many persons, even though he be admired and followed. Originality perplexes conventional perception and thus sometimes causes antagonism. Genius is often eccentric and its eccentricity often mani-

fest itself in capricious conduct. Mansfield, under the most favorable circumstances, might have proved a little trying to the average mind: under adverse circumstances he necessarily became a disturbing influence. His bitter experience in youth, when he was almost destitute and was struggling for a mere subsistence, had made him resentful and combative, and when, after a long period of toil, vicissitude, hope deferred, and restless endurance, he became, to some extent, a dictator of fortune, his strong propensity to self-assertion, his arbitrary insistence on command and conquest, was naturally the cause of opposition and strife. Along almost the whole line of his career there was conflict. Attacks were frequent and so were rejoinders. Sarcasms about actors, newspapers, writers, and audiences fell from his lips and ebullitions of banter came from his pen. Press wrangles and lawsuits attended him. But, whatever the tumult, or whatever might be the cause of it, he was always interesting. His activity was incessant. His enterprise,—neither timid before rivalry nor hesitant before adventure, eager for the production of new plays and expeditions in travel,—was courageous even to audacity. His ambition was never satisfied. No sooner had he accomplished one task than his resolute will enjoined another. "Life is too short to waste," he

said to me; "I must move onward and upward." He wrought in divers fields. As a composer of music he produced melodies as tenderly expressive as some of the sweetest that are wedded to the incomparable songs of Moore. As a writer, although in the literary realm his pretensions were very modest, he used a piquant style with force and grace, depicting character in the tints of nature and evincing decided felicity of dramatic expression: much that is terse, pointed, and significant, in various plays with which his name is publicly associated only as that of a player, in fact proceeded from his pen. As a mimic he was extraordinary. Had he chosen to do so he could have had a conspicuous career as a singer. As an actor, passing gracefully and ably from musical farce to serio-comic drama and from romance to tragedy, he displayed artistic faculties and resources seldom exemplified in all the long history of the dramatic art. Much though he did, there was more that he might have done. His jovial humor was so potent, so various, and so rich that if he had assumed the part of *Falstaff*, as I often earnestly urged him to do, he would, I believe, have surpassed all personations of it that the stage has exhibited in our time. But, qualifications and conjectures set aside, Mansfield was a great actor, he had a great career,

and the community is indebted to him for permanent intellectual benefit.

Throughout that career he conspicuously displayed the faculty of initiative, the faculty of choosing new subjects and making new applications of old ideas. He reverted to Samuel Warren's once famous novel of "Ten Thousand a Year," and he made *Titmouse* a practical stage figure. He recognized George Bernard Shaw as a dramatic writer, producing the best plays that have been made by that erratic, sophisticated, mischievous satirist,—“Arms and the Man” and “The Devil's Disciple.” He prompted the making of a play on that gossamer, romantic novel, “The First Violin.” He caused a drama to be made on the theme of Stevenson's story of dual life, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” and he was the first to put those contrasted characters on the stage. He transformed “Prince Karl” from a poor melodrama into an excellent farce, and, by a performance of exquisite charm, he made that trifle a source of much innocent pleasure. He suggested and inspired a drama on the subject of the last days of the Roman emperor Nero. He imparted a fascinating bodily form to the fanciful, romantic conception of *Beaucaire*. He vitalized, in English, the quaint half-merry, half-sad German play of “Alt Heidelberg.” He reanimated for stage exhibition

the imperial image of Napoleon Bonaparte. He succeeded in winning considerable favor for "The Scarlet Letter," a story that had not before been made theatrically effective. He added to the stage pantheon the grim figure and the tremendous character of the Russian despot, *Ivan, the Terrible*. He revived Molière's "Misanthrope," in English,—setting an example that, eventually, perhaps, will enrich the English-speaking stage with a series of the classics of the literature of France. He reanimated Schiller's "Don Carlos," a respected tragedy, long dead to the theatre; and, in his elaborate productions of "Richard III.," "The Merchant of Venice," "Henry V.," and "Julius Cæsar," he reminded a younger generation that artistic results can be obtained from conscientious presentment of the massive works of Shakespeare. One of his practical and valuable services to the stage and society was the restoration of the custom of having a varied repertory, instead of depending upon one or two parts. That custom he adopted, enforced, and justified, at a time when other dominant theatrical managers were opposed to it and allied against it. Thus his career, while it was one of prodigious labor and of much trial and vicissitude, was one also of varied enterprise, striking novelty, and intrepid and brilliant exploit. Sometimes, how-

ever, his courage faltered and his spirit drooped. Once he announced his intention to retire from the stage at the end of three years; but he did not live to fulfil that intention, and, in any event, he, probably, would not have fulfilled it. The workers, the persons,—always few,—who do the vitally important work of the world, often feel that their task has been done and that their day is over, and often they long for release. It was so with the great novelist Thackeray, who spoke of his work as finished, even before he had written the superb novel of "The Newcomes." It was so with the great actress Charlotte Cushman, who several times took leave of the stage, and as often returned to it. Mansfield's originality of mind and poetry of temperament, combined with his affluent, restless vitality, would always have held him in the realm of art. No other realm, indeed, exists in which there is refuge for a noble soul and a sensitive heart. In all other realms there is the continual tumult of the raving world, and even in the refuge of art the voice of contention and detraction can, and frequently does, make itself heard. Still, come what may, there is no other haven; and, as said by one of the wisest of poets:

He only lives with the world's life,
Who hath renounced his own.

♦

A man of positive character usually inspires enmity, and a successful man, no matter what his vocation, awakens envy and malice. Richard Mansfield was both positive and successful, and therefore detraction often snarled at his heels. Once, when he was recovering from a dangerous, nearly fatal attack of typhoid fever, he received an anonymous letter, coarsely and grossly expressive of its writer's animosity and of a lively regret that the actor had not died. There is, unhappily, a depraved order of mind, capable of atrocity like that,—serving to show how contemptible it is possible for human nature to be, and what essential need there is of a charitable and humorous view of life. Lord Tennyson, in his memoir of his father, mentions that, during a period of forty-two years, the great poet, whenever he published a new poem, received an anonymous letter, always in the same hand, filled with abuse of his poetry. In "The School for Scandal" bluff *Sir Oliver Surface* wisely and tersely declares that the man who has no enemies is the man who has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to honest dignity of genius and virtue. Mansfield had enemies, some of whom he gained by reason of his intellectual superiority, some of whom he gained by his undisguised, natural, and proper contempt, and some of whom he gained because of his occasional arro-

gance. Accordingly he was, from time to time, harshly censured, in print, and also he was sedulously, foolishly, unjustly, and sometimes brutally slandered. It is a shocking but indisputable fact that the multitude is ever more ready to believe evil than good of any distinguished person, and it is true, as said by the poet Alexander Smith, that

The stain of mire
Sits more conspicuous on the captain's mail
Than on the scarred and dented man-at-arms.

Many false, idle, injurious tales about Mansfield were circulated in newspapers, by the contemptible purveyors of what Lord Beaconsfield aptly designated "the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity," and they were often and widely credited. Nervous and impetuous Mansfield was, and at times impolitic and free of speech, loosing, it might be, the shafts of righteous indignation, or it might be the barbs of bitter sarcasm. He was hostile to injustice and to "the oppressor's wrong," for he had known them and suffered under the blight of them, and he was intolerant of dulness and convention. The poet Heine declared that even the clouds, when they happen to drift over the city of Hamburg, the moment they look down at its soulless, deadly regularity of huckstering commonplace and routine, make haste to fly from it. Byron noticed that "quiet

to quick bosoms is a hell." I knew Richard Mansfield for about a quarter of a century; I saw him in many moods and under many and various circumstances; I became acquainted, at first hand, equally with his faults and his merits; and I desire earnestly to testify, without intending to gloss his infirmities, that he was, intrinsically, a good man. In fighting,—sometimes through poverty and sickness,—the hard fight that genius always has to wage against a purse-proud society, entrenched within its ramparts of wealth and privilege, he developed a sporadic tendency to harsh, imperious manners. Furthermore, when dubious as to recognition of his achievement and well-earned rank, he sometimes became distrustful of everybody. *Ajax*, in the pathetic tragedy that Sophocles wrote about him, sagely remarks that few persons reach the port of friendship and therein find rest. At all times Mansfield was of a mercurial temper, and in some moods he fell into deep dejection, undervalued his powers and achievements, firmly persuaded himself that he had done no sort of justice to his profession or his opportunity, and lapsed into a lethargy of morose resentment of all praise and a bitter unbelief in all human affection. But time and experience taught him the need of patience and self-dependence, and his later living and acting evinced a decided

advancement in the repose of conscious power. Victory had been gained. The direction in which, at the last, he was moving, as to intellectual and spiritual development, was the right one. He longed, and often asked, for sweet and gentle plays. He wished to illustrate subjects that are beautiful; to be the interpreter of that dramatic poetry which allures by its enticing glamour; to wield the assured power that is decisively effective because unsolicitous of effect; and, with the intuitive perception that sees human life as a whole, to invest massive and splendid ideals with the magic of careless grace.

To sordid, commonplace minds it is a satisfactory belief that the theatre is merely a shop, and that the art of acting is merely a means for the pursuit of gain. Such minds are numerous, and in the business world they are usually predominant; and, under the perverting control of such minds, the stage has known periods of sad degradation. At intervals, however, strong spirits have arisen in the drama, to vindicate its intrinsic intellectual worth and moral potentiality, to assert its educational drift, and to exalt and extend its social influence. A noble personal force, in fact, sometimes shining forth in great affluence and splendor, and never quite extinct, has been the salvation of the stage, which, but for this fortunate ordainment, would long since have sunk

to ignominious frivolity. The intelligent saving force, which believes in art and is devoted to its cause, has kept the stage alive, in honor and prosperity, and upon that force its dependence must rest. The stalwart presence of Richard Mansfield in the American Theatre, therefore, was auspicious in a high degree. He was a leader; he was a bulwark against the rampant phalanx of theatrical button-makers, and the loss of him will be long felt and deeply mourned.

Information of the death of my old friend reached me at Mentone, in Southern California, and brought with it a solemn sense not only of personal bereavement but of loss to the world. The disappearance of an illustrious figure—the extinction of splendid abilities, and the termination of brilliant accomplishments—imparts an inexpressible feeling of desolation. Mansfield had been my companion in many scenes of busy life, and in that lovely solitude among the mountains. He would never come again. It was then that I wrote the Elegy which here follows,—speaking from the heart, and casting on his grave the white rose of honor and loving remembrance.



Photograph by Marceau, New York

RICHARD MANSFIELD

From His Last Photograph

4

ELEGY FOR MANSFIELD.

WRITTEN AT MENTONE, CALIFORNIA, SEPTEMBER 8, 1907.

For me terrestrial mountains rise;
For thee celestial rivers run;
My steps are 'neath familiar skies,
But thine in realms beyond the sun.

This peaceful scene, that does not change,
This smiling vale, so fair to see,
Those lonely plains, that mountain range,
So glorious,—all were known to thee.

For many a year, in shade or shine,
When life was gay, when life was drear,
Thy friendly hand was clasped in mine,
Thy form was oft beside me here.

Now, though I sought through ev'ry land,
I should not feel, in any place,
The pressure of that loving hand,
Nor hear thy voice, nor see thy face.

So friendship fades, so love departs,
So living joy becomes a name
Shrin'd in the depth of breaking hearts,—
And yet the world remains the same.

The roses bloom, the fields are green,
The branches wave, the streamlets flow,—
For Nature, ruffled or serene,
Is deaf and blind to human woe.

Thy mind to beauty was subdued,
In Beauty's service thou wert blest,—
Stern warrior in the bitter feud
That would not let thy spirit rest:

The feud that wakes angelic rage,
The strife in which so many tire,
The deadly war that Art must wage
With mean intent and low desire.

Sleep sweetly, noble heart and true!
The tempest of thy life is o'er;
Nor baffled hope, nor pang of rue,
Nor any grief can wound thee more!

Sleep sweetly, in that hallow'd dell,
Far off, beside the solemn sea,
Where tears and prayers will, constant, tell,
The love that lives to mourn for thee.

There wild flowers, emblems of thy soul,
Around thy tomb will bud and blow,
While Ocean's melancholy roll
Will chaunt thy requiem, soft and low.

There oft the pilgrim's musing gaze
Will linger on the votive stone
That mutely tells to future days
Thy power and charm, forever flown.

And there, in golden time to come,
When all the clamor of our day
Has sunk to silence, and the hum
Of vain detraction died away,

Fame's Angel, hov'ring o'er thy rest,
His amaranthine bough will wave,
Proclaiming— Here lies Glory's guest,
Here Genius sleeps in MANSFIELD's grave!

MANSFIELD'S WRITINGS.

MANSFIELD did not wish to do anything that he could not do more than well. He distrusted his faculties as a writer, and he did not sedulously cultivate them. He knew that writing is a fine art, and whenever he essayed to practice it he did so in a spirit equally modest and sincere. The volume of his writings is considerable, and while all that he wrote is interesting some of it is exceptionally fine. His tragedy of "Don Juan" is, distinctly, a valuable addition to dramatic literature. He did much literary labor that can only be indicated,—formulating ideas for plays, making rough drafts of them, improvising dialogue, and revising the work of other hands. It is not possible to designate precisely all that he contributed to various plays that he produced, but in the course of this memoir that subject has received due consideration. The story told in the farce of "Prince Karl," is said to have been suggested by certain veritable occurrences in the life of a German nobleman. Mansfield's revision of that play was particularly adroit and felicitous. "Beau Brummell" owes almost everything to him.

He wrote "Monsieur." His pen greatly improved "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "Nero," "The Scarlet Letter," and "Ten Thousand a Year." It is interesting to remember that, many years ago, that admirable comedian, Edward A. Sothorn, the prince of whimsicality, wished to have a play written on the subject of "Ten Thousand a Year," and to act *Oily Gammon*. Mansfield, though he called it "rubbish," never quite relinquished the belief that a really fine play might be built from the story, and perhaps he could have substantiated the belief if he had chosen to devote himself to the necessary hard work. His faculty of invention and his facility in writing dialogue were alike remarkable, as shown in his clever satirical monologue "As You Find It" (1904), one sentence of which bitterly enough expresses the conviction that his experience had taught him: "You can have anything you want in this world, if you'll pay the price for it." (That title, "As You Find It," was used by Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, 1676-1731, for a comedy of his, published in 1703, telling the story of an amatory intrigue.) Mention should be made that the capital dance music, played in an episode of frolic, at an Inn, in the tragedy of "Don Juan," was composed by Mansfield, and also that he wrote the exquisite melody that is sung by *Don Juan*, when serenading

Donna Julia, in that play, a melody that the grim *Duke*, who has just plotted to kill him, is obliged to hear. The best of Mansfield's lyrical efforts is this celebration of a British military exploit in Africa, in the Boer War:

THE CHARGE OF DARGAI GAP.

Bulldogs, hark! Did your courage fail?
Bulldogs, hark! Did your glory pale?
What of the slander that says "Decayed!"
"Gone to the dogs since the Light Brigade!"
For the blood and bone that humbled Nap,
'Twas there again, boys, in Dargai Gap!
Did you hear the swish of the flying shot?
The roll of the drum and the rattle pot?
The music that rose clear o'er that yell
And thrilled through the ranks and stirred up hell!
Come, Highland laddie, head up, step forth!
A crown of glory! "Cock o' the North!"
You "Cock o' the North," aye, pipe away!
With both stumps gone, and you won the day!
You may lean your back against comrades now,
They'll moisten your lips and they'll kiss your brow,
For they fought like men, and a man may weep
When he lays a man to his last long sleep.
Bulldogs who sleep on the Dargai Ridge,
Fall in! Quick, march! and over the bridge!
The piper's ahead, and the same old air,
To pipe you to heaven and vet'rans there!
And you'll tell the bullies who humbled Nap
The glorious story of Dargai Gap.

The following is a list, except as to Music, thought to be complete, of the published writings with which his name is associated:

As You Find It: A Monologue. First called As You Don't Like It.

Beau Brummell: Play, in Four Acts: By dictation to the late William Clyde Fitch.

Blown Away: A Nonsense Book.

Charge at Dargai Gap, The: Poem.

Concerning Acting: Article; "The North American Review."

Don Juan: Tragedy, in Five Acts.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: Play, Revised and Altered, from play by Thomas Russell Sullivan.

Eagle's Song, The: Poem.

First Violin, The: Play, in Four Acts, made in collaboration, under name of *Meridan Phelps*, with J. I. C. Clarke, on basis of Jessie Fothergill's novel.

King Henry V., Stage Version, with an Introduction.

King Richard III., Stage Version, with an Introduction.

Man and the Actor: Article; "Atlantic Monthly."

Monsieur: Play, in Four Acts.

My Audiences and Myself: Article; "Collier's Weekly."

Nero: Tragedy, in Five Acts, Revised and Altered, from play by Thomas Russell Sullivan.

One Evening: A Collection of Songs: Music by Mansfield; also, in several instances, the words.

Plain Talk on the Drama, A: Article; "North American Review."

Prince Karl: Farce, in Four Acts: Revised and Altered, from an original by A. C. Gunter.

Scarlet Letter, The: Drama, in Five Acts: Altered from play by Joseph Hatton, based on Hawthorne's novel.

Story of a Production, The: Article; "Harper's Weekly."

Sketches Out of the Life of a Great Singer: (His Mother).

Talking *v.* Acting: An Address.

ERMINIA RUDERSDORFF.

ERMINIA RUDERSDORFF, the mother of Richard Mansfield, was born at Ivanowsky, in the Ukraine, Russia, December 12, 1822. Her father, Joseph Rudersdorff, was a violinist, of high repute. She studied music, in Paris, under the tuition of Bordogni, and in Milan, under that of De Micheront. Her first professional appearance was made in 1840, at Leipsic. She had the greater part of her career in Europe, and for many years she resided in London, where her first appearance was made in 1854 (the year of Richard Mansfield's birth), at Drury Lane, in German opera. In 1872 she was engaged, by Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, to sing, in "The World's Peace Jubilee," in Boston. She sailed from England, June 1, aboard the *Java*, and, on reaching Boston, lodged in the old Tremont House. On the opening day of the Jubilee she sang "Inflammatus," from Rossini's "Stabat Mater." At one of the ensuing concerts she sang a song called "Homage to Columbia," which was designated on the programme as follows: "Melody composed, the Words written, and sung by Madame Erminia

Rudersdorff, accompanied by the Band of the Grenadier Guards, conducted by Mr. Dan Godfrey." At another concert she sang "Let the Bright Seraphim," from "Samson," "with trumpet obligato by Mr. M. Arbuckle." She also sang Alberto Randegger's *scena* called "Medea." Her first appearance in Opera, in America, was made on October 30, 1873, at the Boston Theatre, as *Leonora*, in "Il Trovatore." A Boston newspaper of that period mentions a concert, given at the Town Hall in Swampscott, Mass., for a Benefit, on which occasion "Mme. Rudersdorff, who kindly consented to sing, gave two selections," and, it adds:

A young gentleman who was mentioned in the programme as "Mr. R. M." sang a German song and "The Young Mountaineer," by Randegger. At the end of the concert this same young gentleman informed the audience, with much apparent delight, that Miss Gregory (the beneficiary) was too indisposed to sing, and instead was glad to say that he was going to sing for her, and, much to the astonishment of everybody, sang, in a high falsetto, "Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?" after the style of Mme. Liebhart, and for an encore, as he had made quite a hit, rendered the "Carnival of Venice," à la Carlotta Patti.

That youth was Richard Mansfield. The songs of Randegger, one of his mother's intimate friends, were especially prized by Mme. Rudersdorff, and persons who remember her singing of them testify



*With great respect
to the President of the
Board of Directors*

*Golden Lane
New York*

MME. ERMINIA MANSFIELD RUDERSDORFF

that it was sympathetic and beautiful. She taught her son to sing them, and at all times Mansfield's singing of any simple ballad would touch the heart. Mme. Rudersdorff was herself a composer of music: her setting of Longfellow's poem of "The Rainy Day" has long been favorably known.

Her country house was situated on Sawyer Hill, in Berlin, near Fitchburg, Mass. She possessed and cultivated a large farm, adjacent to that residence, and so practical was her interest in agriculture that, in the local agricultural fairs, she competed for prizes, exhibiting both vegetables and cattle. Her dwelling was burnt down, in 1881, and a large mansion now occupies the site where once it stood. She had several resident pupils, while she lived in Berlin, among them being Miss Emma V. Thursby, Miss Lazar (now the wife of the much esteemed Judge, Stephen D. Stephens, of New Brighton, Staten Island), Isabel Fassett, Miss St. Clair, Fanny Kellogg, and Miss Van Buren. There is a tradition in the village of Berlin, that, sometimes, when it pleased some of those pupils to try their voices, near to a large boulder in the woods of their teacher's estate, the sound of their singing could be heard in the village, a mile distant.

Erminia Rudersdorff was a woman of sturdy individuality, exceptional talents, and strong and inter-

esting character. Persons who often heard her singing testify that she possessed a superb voice, that her method was wonderfully fine, and that, on all professional occasions, she dominated by innate authority. Personally she was erratic and unconventional, to the last degree, sometimes manifesting a harsh, imperious temper, and habitually disregarding the social views and customs of the community in which she dwelt. She was, for example, fond of smoking, and she would smoke cigars when driving in the Berlin roads. Her conduct towards her pupils was sometimes rude and severe, but also it was sometimes affectionate and endearing. In some moods she was delightful. She had known much trouble and sorrow. She was intemperate, and she did not grow old gracefully; but she had a kind heart, and it is probable that she was not less estimable for being unpopular. Several of her pupils resident at Berlin were poor, but they were gratuitously entertained and taught by her, because she perceived their musical talent and wished that it should be developed and not wasted. Correct appreciation of the character of the mother is perhaps, helpful toward an understanding of the character of the son.

Mme. Rudersdorff died, at the Hotel La Grange,

HIS MOTHER'S GRAVE 353

in Boston, on February 22, 1882, and was buried at Mount Auburn, where her grave, near Wistaria Path, is marked by a boulder of rough granite, to which is affixed a bronze plate, bearing this inscription:

ERMINIA RUDERSDORF
MANSFIELD

The remains of an inscription that formerly was on the boulder, and that has been partly obliterated, are discernible. A person who remembers having seen the stone soon after it was placed in position says that it then bore only the word:

RUDERSDORFF

There is no room in the lot for other graves, and in summer the boulder is completely covered with ivy.

Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" records that Erminia Rudersdorff was married, in 1844, at Frankfort, to Dr. Küchenmeister, a Professor of Mathematics. The Professor disappears from the record. Her marriage to Maurice Mansfield occurred later, in Berlin. The Dictionary further states that she wrote the libretto for Randegger's cantata in "Fridolin," based on Schiller's "Gang nach dem Eisenhammer," sung at a festival in Birmingham, England, in 1873.

HIS MOTHER'S WILL.

The Will of Mansfield's mother is a singularly characteristic document, as clearly indicative of her resolute mind as it is of her affectionate heart. She wrote it on October 15, 1881, at which time her house at Berlin had not been burnt, and when, accordingly, her estate was considerable, in both extent and value, and she bequeathed "everything to my dear son Richard Mansfield," under a few "exceptions and conditions." Richard was then living at Number 57 Berners Street, Oxford Street, London. A few indicative passages from this interesting relic, obviously the composition of the testator, are appended.

MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

Boston, Mass.,

October 15th., 1881.

At present—to-day—my property consists in my estate Lakeside, Berlin, Mass. \$1,500 in the hands of Mr. Henley Luce of Messrs. Kidder and Peabody, Bankers, of this town. About \$500 in the international Trust Company. A small balance in the 1st. National Bank, of Clinton, Mass. My furniture, Piano, Pictures, rugs, bric-a-brac, Plate, china, linen, wardrobe, Jewellery and silver.

I give my dear daughter Greta, wife of Gaston Bat-

tanchon of the Chateau De La Rague, Aignan, Gess, France, the enamelled and jewelled ornaments pendant and earrings, from the empress Eugenie, the gold bracelet with three Diamonds and "Hermine Mansfeld" engraved inside and the Tietjens ring, 1 Torquoise, 2 medium and 6 small Diamonds, also my enamelled watch, chain and breloques thereon.

I give my son, Henry Mansfield, of this city, my ring with three turquoises, and all the furniture and bric-a-brac and rugs at present in his room in Tremont Street. This is to be given him in full discharge of any claim he may want to make upon my property.

I leave to my sister, Matsilde Rudersdorff of Jena, in Germany, all my dresses, shawls, mantles, lace, body linen—everything in my wardrobe, with exceptions as below. Also my ring with 3 diamonds and the one with 4 turquoises.

To my dear pupil, Speranza, Emma Thursby, the gold link roman bracelet with "Vita tibi."

To my good pupil Fannie Kellogg, a black Cashemire India bournous, embroidered with white silk, also a black net skirt, embroidered with white silk, also a new pair of old gold silk stockings and a wide Limerick lace flounce, which she knows.

If the jewellery does not bring *good* prizes, it is not to be sold, but kept for Richie's wife, if he marries one his friends approve of.

Beyond the property above stated, I have a valuable 4 year colt, Coquette, with my good friend Mr. Arthur Hastings, at South Berlin, Mass., and a mare, Kittie Allen, and a Phaeton, Harness etc., at Nim's Stables—These are to be sold. Coquette ought to bring a high figure.

After paying my just debts, all money is to be invested to best advantage and paid to my dear boy, Richie, Richard Mansfield, when he marries, provided he does not marry under five years from this year 1881, and the month of December.

I give Arthur Hastings of South Berlin, Mass., one of the charcoal drawings by my son, Richard Mansfield.

I give to Captain Silas Sawyer of Berlin, Mass., also one of the above charcoal drawings, as thanks for building a stone hut over my coffin at Lakeside, which I know he will do.

Miss Ada St. Clair, at present 957 Hancock Street, owes me \$42 which are to be collected.

October 18th, 1881.

ERMINIA MANSFIELD RUDERSDORFF.

Witness:

JULIA R. HOTCHKISS.

L. LOUISE BRIGHAM.

The will was re-executed February 25, 1882, having been interlined, in the presence of I. T. Talbot, M. E. Emery, and Ellen Jones.

BEATRICE CAMERON—MRS. MANSFIELD.

SUSAN HEGEMAN, daughter of William H. Hegeman and Esther Byram Hegeman, known on the stage as Beatrice Cameron, was born at Troy, N. Y., in 1868. She began her career as an amateur, appearing with Mrs. Cora Urquhart Potter, in "A Midnight Marriage." Later she gained some experience, acting in the company of Robert Mantell, in the play of "Called Back," and she also appeared in "Arrah-na-Pogue," and in one or two other plays. She joined Richard Mansfield's company in 1886, making her first appearance with him, at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, as *Mrs. Florence Lowell*, in "Prince Karl," on May 17 that year, and she continued to act, as leading woman in his company, until February 12, 1898, at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, when she retired from the stage. She was the *first* representative of the chief female characters in all the plays produced by him, during the time indicated, except that of *Agnes Carew*, in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," that part having been first acted by Miss Isabella Evesson, and that of *Mariana Vincent*, in "Beau Brummell," that part having been first acted by Miss Agnes

Miller. Since her formal retirement she has appeared on the stage only once, January 8, 1900, at the Garden Theatre, New York, on which occasion she acted *Raina*, in "Arms and the Man," a play which Mansfield then presented for the last time.

Her repertory comprised:

Mrs. Florence Lowell.....	"Prince Karl"
Agnes Carew.....	"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"
Alice Golden.....	"Monsieur"
Lesbia.....	"Lesbia"
Lady Anne.....	"Richard III."
Letty Lightfoot.....	"Master and Man"
Nora.....	"A Doll's House"
Mariana Vincent.....	"Beau Brummell"
Lucia.....	"Don Juan"
Acte.....	"Nero"
Tessy Tagrag.....	"Ten Thousand a Year"
Hester Prynne.....	"The Scarlet Letter"
Portia.....	"The Merchant of Venice"
Raina.....	"Arms and the Man"
Queen Louisa of Prussia.....	"Napoleon Bonaparte"
Clara Desmond.....	"The King of Peru"
Lady Thyrza.....	"Castle Sombras"
Judith Anderson.....	"The Devil's Disciple"

As an actress Beatrice Cameron was exceedingly winning in the character of *Mrs. Lowell*, presenting an image of girlish happiness, and she was variously able and brilliant as *Lucia*, *Hester Prynne*, *Nora*, and *Raina*,—the latter being, perhaps, her best performance, considered as a work of art, and being,



Photograph by Marceau, New York

MRS. MANSFIELD AND GEORGE GIBBS MANSFIELD

also, one of the best examples of the satire of romance that have been seen. She seemed inclined to cultivate a taste for theatrical parts of a bizarre character, but her natural aptitude was for parts representative either of frolic, pensive sweetness, or deep womanly feeling. Her *Lucia* was one of the decisive artistic successes of her career. The identification with the assumed state of a boy, incidental to that impersonation,—when *Lucia*, dressed as a page, follows *Don Juan* into danger,—was complete; the bearing was free, and even martial; the feeling was deep and true; and the utterance of the feeling was fluent, musical, and tender. As *Tessy*, in “Ten Thousand a Year,” she gave a performance remarkable for bright intelligence, natural, sustained vivacity, and winning ardor. As a woman Mrs. Mansfield is highly esteemed for her patience, placid resolution, gentleness, loyalty, and executive faculty. She understood and deeply appreciated her husband, and her sound business judgment was a sagacious guide to him. The desire of most persons, whatever their pursuit, is for the gratification of their wishes, irrespective of others. The principal aims of Beatrice Mansfield were to protect her husband’s interest, cheer his life, and promote his happiness. She is remarkable, among women of the stage, for the cheerful alacrity with which,

for his sake, she set aside her professional ambition. There are not many actors who realize that success in life is possible away from the stage.

Mere encomium is not intended, but a true picture of character and right appreciation of it. At a time when Mrs. Mansfield was enduring bereavement, and when she knew of the fatal illness of a member of my family, she wrote to me, in a sweet and gentle spirit, and perhaps her gracious letter, which discloses, in few words, so much of herself and of the husband whom she so much loved, will not be deemed amiss, in this portrayal of their lives:

My Dear Mr. Winter:—

It is hard to see our dear ones fade away. It may be well for them, but it is very hard for us. I wish, oh, so *much*—that we lived “within a day’s journey” of each other. Dick seems to realize, more and more, as years pass on, how much we need the friends we love, and who are interested in the things we care for. He is so restless and depressed—and I can see it is because he has no one to whom he can talk of the things which are his life. There is no artistic atmosphere; it is all sordid, hard, and commonplace.

He misses you—the congenial interchange of ideas, the new thoughts that come of meeting another thought half way. I express myself badly—but what I want to try and tell you—have you not often felt, that this city lacked that place of meeting for men of letters? Or is it the element that is lacking? But what I am really trying to say is this—if we could only see *you* sometimes! Will you try and come up



MRS. MANSFIELD AND HER SON IN 1908

some day? It would do Dick more good than I can say. There seems to be no one to whom he can talk of the things that are dear to him.

Always your sincere friend,

BEATRICE MANSFIELD.

The story of the Life of Richard Mansfield would be sadly incomplete without some tribute to one who was his best friend, to whom, in all his troubles, disappointments, and sufferings, he turned for comfort and cheer, and never turned in vain.

END OF VOLUME I.

